

EASTERN BENGAL AND ASSAM
DISTRICT GAZETTEERS.

JALPAIGURI

BY

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INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE.



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PREFACE.

IN writing this volume, I have found Mr. Sunder's Report on the Survey and Settlement of the Western Duārs (1895) of great assistance. I desire also to acknowledge my indebtedness to the many persons who have helped me in compiling this account of the Jalpāiguri district. The map of the district has been kindly prepared by Mr. J. A. Milligan, I.C.S., Settlement Officer of Jalpāiguri.

JOHN F. GRUNING.

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GAZETTEER

OF THE

JALPAIGURI DISTRICT.

CHAPTER I.

PHYSICAL ASPECTS.

THE district of Jalpāiguri lies between $26^{\circ} 0'$ and $27^{\circ} 0'$ north latitude, and between $88^{\circ} 20'$ and $89^{\circ} 53'$ east longitude; it contains an area of 2,961 square miles, and its population, which was 787,380 souls at the census of 1901, has increased considerably in recent years. The principal town—in fact the only place in the district of sufficient size to be called a town—and the administrative head-quarters of the district and of the Rājshāhi division, is Jalpāiguri, situated on the west or right bank of the Tista river in $26^{\circ} 32' N.$ and $88^{\circ} 43' E.$ The name Jalpāiguri is derived from *jalpāi*, an olive tree, and *guri*, a place; it means, therefore, the place of the olive trees, of which there used at one time to be many in the town.

GENERAL
DESCRIPTION.

The present district of Jalpāiguri consists of the Western Duārs, annexed in 1865 after the war with Bhutān, and the thānās of Jalpāiguri,* Bodā, Rājganj† and Pātgrām, separated from the Rangpur district in 1869 and 1870. It is bounded on the north by the district of Darjeeling and the Independent State of Bhutān, on the south by the district of Rangpur and the State of Cooch Behār, on the west by the districts of Darjeeling, Purnea and Dinājpur, and on the east by the Eastern Duārs, which forms part of the district of Goālpārā, the right bank of the Sankos river marking the boundary line. The Pātgrām thānā is an isolated tract, separated entirely from the main district and surrounded on all sides by the Cooch Behār State.

Boundaries.

The district comprises two well defined tracts, which differ alike in history and in administration. The older portion, which lies for the most part to the west of the Tista, though it comprises also the Pātgrām thānā to the east of that river, is permanently settled, and resembles closely the district of Rangpur of which it once formed part. East of the Tista, and hemmed in between the Independent States of Bhutān on the north and Cooch Behār on the south, lies a strip of submontane country about 22 miles in width, known as the Western Duārs, which was annexed from Bhutān in 1865. This part of the district is included in the

Natural
divisions.

* Formerly Fakirganj. | † Formerly Sanyāsikātā or Siliguri.

list of scheduled districts, but most of the ordinary laws and regulations of Bengal are now in force in it.

Scenery.

The country west of the Tista river and the Pātgrām thānā differs little from the neighbouring districts of Rangpur and Dinājpur. The continuous expanse of level paddy fields is broken only by the groves of bamboos, betel-nut palms, and fruit trees, which surround the homesteads of the substantial tenant-farmers. There is little uncultivated land with the exception of an extensive *sāl* forest, covering an area of 81 square miles, belonging to the Rāikat of Bāikanthpur. In the cold weather and particularly in the months of November and December, a magnificent view of the snowy peaks of the Darjeeling Himālayas can be seen, with Kinchinjunga (28,146 feet) towering above the rest.

Sir W. W. Hunter, in his Statistical Account of Jalpāiguri, gives the following description of the Western Duārs :—‘The Bhutān Duārs, the tract which was annexed at the close of the war of 1864-65, is a flat, level strip of country, averaging about 22 miles in width, running along the foot of the Bhutān hills; its chief characteristics are the numerous rivers and hill streams which intersect it in every direction, and the large tracts of *sāl* forest and heavy grass and reed jungle, interspersed with wild cardamoms. These grass and reed tracts are especially dense and luxuriant along the banks of the rivers and streams, where they grow many feet in height; in some places they are impenetrable by man. Here the beautiful cotton tree (*Bombax malabaricum*) is to be found growing in great luxuriance and with surprising vigour and rapidity, resisting even the action of the fires by which the jungles and under-growth are yearly consumed at the commencement of every cultivating season. With this single exception, these vast tracts of grassy jungle are almost treeless, and bring out into greater relief the village sites, situated few and far between. These little hamlets are remarkable for the most luxuriant vegetation. Large clumps of bamboos and groves of plantain trees hem them in on all sides, almost hiding the houses from view. Above them are seen the tall, graceful betel-nut palms, and here and there a few other large trees, such as mango, jack, and pipal; and round about the dwellings, in fact up to the very doorways, are shrubs and creeping-plants of endless form and variety. Fine fields of rice and mustard are also found in the vicinity of the villages. The scenery in the north of the Duārs, along the foot of the mountains, where the large rivers debouch upon the plains, is very grand and beautiful, especially at the point where the Sankos river leaves the hills. In the neighbourhood of the Bhutān range, far from five to ten miles before reaching the hills, the land rises gradually. In this tract the soil is only from three to four feet deep, with a substratum of gravel and shingle; and in the dry season the beds of the streams for some miles after leaving the

hills are dry, the water re-appearing farther down. Owing to the difficulty of procuring water, there are no villages in this region.'

Since the above account was written, a great change has taken place. Few districts in India have developed as rapidly as the Western Duārs. The northern tract along the base of the hills, between the Tista and Torsā rivers, is now covered by prosperous tea-gardens, separated only by rivers or occasional areas of reserved forest; east of the Torsā the chain of tea-gardens continues right up to the Sankos river, but is broken up by larger stretches of forest. South of the tea-gardens as far east as the Torsā river, little jungle is left except on the banks of rivers and streams and in the vicinity of the forests; nearly the whole of the land is under cultivation and grows magnificent crops of rice, jute, tobacco and mustard. Homesteads of well-to-do tenant-farmers are seen in every direction, and the increase of prosperity is shown by the number of houses with galvanised iron roofs which are springing up on every side. On the other side of the Torsā there is more jungle and large areas of reserved forest containing valuable *sāl* and *sissu* trees may be seen; but even in this remote part of the district, cultivation is extending fast, and the jungle is disappearing rapidly.

The scenery near the hills, particularly where the Tista, Jaldhākā, Rāidhak, and Sankos rivers debouch into the plains is very fine; west of the Torsā the wooded hills of Bhutān with Kinchinjunga in the background form a splendid picture, and though the view changes farther east where the reserved forests intervene between the cultivated land and the hills, these forests are not without a beauty of their own. No better idea of the forests in the Duārs can be obtained than on the road between Buxā Road station and Santrabāri where the climb up to Buxā Cantonment begins. Fine *sāl* trees abound and farther north when the orchids are in bloom in March and April the forests are very beautiful.

The only hills in the district are the Sinchula Hills to the east of the Torsā, which rise abruptly to a height of from 4,000 to 6,000 feet, and form the boundary between British and Bhutān territory. The military station of Buxā is built on an outlying spur of this range on hills of heights from 1,659 to 2,457 feet. Buxā Duār is one of the principal passes into Bhutān and a hill road leads direct from it to Muricham in Bhutān.

The rivers and streams of the Jalpāiguri district are very numerous, particularly in the Western Duārs; they flow from north to south, and as they debouch suddenly from the hills on to the plains, and rise and fall with great rapidity, frequently changing their courses, they often do much damage. Near the hills they are full of boulders, and rapids are met with; lower down they are sandy; their banks are ill-defined, and as they bring down quantities of silt and debris from the hills, they

HILLS.

RIVER
SYSTEM.

continually tend to raise their beds. Owing to the porous character of the soil near the hills, many of the rivers in the Western Duārs sink below the surface and re-appear a few miles farther on.

The principal rivers in the district from west to east are the Mahānadi or Mahānandā, Karātoyā, Tista, Jaladhākā, Duduyā, Mujnāi, Torsā, Kālājāni, Rāidhak, and Sankos. A short account of these is given below.

Mahānadi.

The Mahānadi has its source near Mahaldirām in the Darjeeling district and flows in a southerly direction to a short distance above Siliguri where it alters its course slightly towards the west and enters the Jalpāiguri District. From this point it forms the boundary between Jalpāiguri and the Darjeeling and Purnea districts. At Titālyā* it passes into Purnea and, after traversing Mālda, falls into the Ganges within the Rājshāhi district. Dr. Buchanan-Hamilton in 1809 thus describes this river, so far as it concerns the Jalpāiguri district:—

'The Mahānandā, for about five miles after entering upon the plains, forms the boundary between the kingdom of Nepāl and the Company's territory. For about six miles it separates this jurisdiction from that of Purnea and then flows a long way through that district until it reaches the frontier of Dinājpur. So far as it continues on the frontier of Rangpur (now Jalpāiguri) the Mahānandā is inconsiderable. It has, indeed, a channel of no small size, being perhaps three hundred yards wide; but in the dry season the quantity of water is trifling, and even in the highest floods it does not overflow its banks. It rises suddenly and falls quickly, so that boats do not attempt to navigate it; and even in the rainy season it is only frequented by canoes, which ascend with difficulty, but aid in floating down a little timber. In dry weather its stream is beautifully clear. From this district, the Mahānandā receives three small branches which take their rise from springs in the fields. The most northerly is the Trināyi, which joins the Mahānandā a little south of Sanyāsikātā. The next is the Ranchandi, which, rising in Sanyāsikātā, afterwards separates that division from that of Bodā. The third is a more considerable stream; it takes its rise in Sanyāsikātā from two heads, the eastern one called Chakar and the western Dayuk. After this junction this last name is preserved, and after passing through the division of Bodā, it joins the Mahānandā in the Purnea district.'

Near Siliguri the bed of the Mahānadi is stony and the Eastern Bengal State Railway obtains much of its ballast from this source.

The name Mahānadi is a Bengali corruption of the Lepchā word Mahaldi.

* I have adhered to the spelling adopted in the Imperial Gazetteer. The transliteration of the ordinary Bengali spelling is Tetulia.

The Karātoyā rises in the Bāikanthpur forest in the extreme north-west of the district and after a very winding course flows into the Rangpur district at the little village of Rāiganj, where a small market is held. During the rains boats of a thousand maunds burden can navigate it as far as Ambāri Fālākātā; north of this the stream dwindles and becomes altogether inconsiderable. Its principal tributaries are the Tālmā and Chanī on the right, and the Sāhu on the left bank; they are rapid torrents in the rains and almost dry during the rest of the year. The banks of the Karātoyā are almost everywhere cultivated, though here and there are small patches of grass and scrub jungle which occasionally hold a leopard.

In 1809 Dr. Buchanan-Hamilton wrote the following account of this river where it passes through the present district of Jalpāiguri:—

‘The topography of this river is attended with numerous difficulties. It runs for about forty-five miles through the centre of the north-western divisions of this district and is then swallowed up by the old channels of the Tista. It forms the boundary for a few miles between Nepāl and the dominions of the Company. It then passes a mile or two through the latter, and enters a small territory’ (now the Ambāri Fālākātā tahsil) ‘belonging to Bhutān, through which it passes for five or six miles, and re-enters the district as a pretty considerable river, which in the rainy season admits of being navigated. Its channel is not so wide as that of the Mahānandā, but it does not rise or fall so rapidly. More timber is floated down its channel than that of the Mahānandā; and when it has reached Bhajanpur, a mart in Bodā, it is frequented in the rainy season by boats of 400 maunds burden. During this part of its course, it receives from the west a river, which rises from the low hills of the territory of Sikkim, with two heads, named the Jurāpāni and Sanga, which unite under the latter name in the division of Sanyāsikātā, and fall into the Karātoyā in Bodā. Below this for some distance, the Karātoyā marks the boundary between Rangpur’ (now Jalpāiguri) ‘and Purnea, after which turning to the eastward, it passes entirely through the former, and has on its southern bank a considerable mart named Pochagarh, to which boats of 1,000 maunds, or about 35 tons burden, can come in the rainy season. It is, however, only boats of about half this tonnage which usually ascend so far. A little above Pochagarh the Karātoyā receives from the north, a small river named the Chanī, which takes its rise in a field in Sanyāsikātā division, and has a course of about fourteen miles. Below Pochagarh, the Karātoyā receives from the same direction a river named the Tālmā, which rises in the forests towards the frontier.

‘From this point the Karātoyā is a very considerable river, passing through the division of Bodā, and in parts separating it

from detached portions subject to the Rājā of Cooch Behār, until it receives from the Tista a branch called the Ghorāmārā. The united stream for about two miles retains the name of Ghorāmārā, for the old channel of Karātoyā has become almost dry; but at Sāldāngā, a considerable mart, the Karātoyā again resumes its name, and in the rainy season is usually frequented by boats of from five to six hundred maunds burden. The Karātoyā then continues its course to the south-east for about three miles, when it joins the old Tista and again loses its name, although it is at present the most considerable stream; but the immense sandy channel of the Tista attests its former grandeur. In fact, when Major Rennel made his survey, the great body of the Tista came this way and joined the Atrāi; but in the destructive floods of 1194 B. S. or 1787 A.D. the greater part of the water of the Tista returned to its more ancient bed to the east (in which it still continues to flow), and has left this immense channel almost dry. I shall therefore proceed to give an account of this channel as forming the Karātoyā.

'It is called the Burī or Old Tista, although from the course of the Karātoyā it is evident that the original direction of the Tista must have been somewhat near its present bed, that is to the eastward. This Old Tista separates from the great river at a place called Fakirganj, about nineteen miles north from its junction with the Karātoyā; and, except during the rainy season, it is not navigable by canoes. Even in the floods it does not admit boats of any size. Attempts have been made, by order of Government, to restore at least a part of the water of the Tista to this channel, but the efforts have been in vain, and the waters are still (1809) diminishing every year. The water of the Old Tista is still further lessened by the departure of the Ghorāmārā, after which it continues a very trifling stream with an immense channel until it receives the Karātoyā at Debiganj. At all seasons canoes navigate this portion of the river, and boats of a thousand maunds burden are often loaded at this mart, but the vessels usually employed are from four hundred to six hundred maunds. The river continues nearly of the same size until it reaches the frontier of Dinājpur, about nine miles below Debiganj; and the name of the Old Tista continues to be given to it after it has passed into Dinājpur, until it reaches the mouth of a canal which connects it with the Dhāpā river. There it assumes the name of the Atrāi.'

It will be seen that Dr. Buchanan-Hamilton describes the united stream, after the junction of the Karātoyā at Debiganj as the Old Tista; it is, however, marked in subsequent maps as the Kurto or Karto river. The Karātoyā proper branches off from the east or left bank of the Old Tista or Karta river, just above the point where the latter enters the Dinājpur district. After a few miles, under a variety of names, it marks the boundary between Rangpur and Dinājpur, until it flows into the Bogrā district.

These changes of name, which are most confusing, arise from the alteration of the physical features of the country caused by the floods of 1787, when the Tista deserted the channel, by which it passed its waters into the Ganges, for its present course by which it joins the Brāhmaputra. Dr. Buchanan-Hamilton writes that 'the floods of 1787 seem totally to have changed the appearance of this part of the country, and to have covered it with beds of sand, so that few of the old channels can be traced for any distance; and the rivers which remain seldom retain the same name for more than three or four miles in any one part of their course. The name of the Karātoyā, in particular, is completely lost for a space of about 20 miles, and is only discovered again a little south of Darwānī (a police station and village in the north of the present district of Rangpur).'

The Tista is the largest river in the district. It rises on the far side of the Himālayas and, after passing through Sikkim, bursts through the mountain barrier and enters the plains through a gorge known as the Sivok Golā pass. It then traverses the Darjeeling Tarai and enters the Jalpāiguri district at its north-west corner. For some distance from this point its bed is stony and it contains little water during the dry season, while the swiftness of its current and the numerous rapids render it useless for navigation during the rains. At Jalpāiguri and for a considerable distance above it, large boats can navigate the river all the year round though it is always dangerous in a heavy flood, when the ferry boats between Jalpāiguri and Barnes Junction often have to stop working and the only way to reach the Western Duārs is by rail *via* Parbatipur and Lālmanir Junctions. It has no tributaries of any importance on the right or west bank; on the left bank the principal tributaries are the Lesu or Lish, the Ghish and the Dhallā rivers. The Dhallā is formed by the confluence of the Chel, Māl and Neorā rivers and brings down a considerable volume of water. The Tista forms the boundary of the Western Duārs, dividing it from the permanently settled portion of the district which formerly belonged to Rangpur; it enters the Rangpur district from Pātgrām and falls into the Brāhmaputra a little above the town of Rāniganj. The Tista.

In the description given above of the Karātoyā river some account will be found of the old course of the Tista before the disastrous floods of 1787. Major Rennel's atlas of 1770 shows this old course and at page 352 of his *Memoir of a Map of Hindustan*, he states:—

'The Tista is a large river which runs almost parallel to the Ganges for nearly a hundred and fifty miles. During the dry season, the waters of the Tista run into those of the Ganges by two distinct channels, situated about 20 miles from each other, and a third channel at the same time discharges itself into the Meghna; but during the season of the floods, the Ganges runs into the Tista

whose outlet is then confined to the channel that communicates with the Meghna.'

Dr. Buchanan-Hamilton, writing about 1809, makes the following remarks about the Tista and its branches during its course through the Jalpaiguri district:—

'The Tista enters this district at its northern extremity, where it is bounded by the country of Sikkim subject to Nepāl' (now the district of Darjeeling), and continues for about twenty-three miles from thence to the boundary between the Company's territory and that of the Deb Rājā of Bhutān' (now the western Duārs). 'It is here an exceedingly wide channel, from six hundred to eight hundred yards wide. At all seasons it contains a great deal of water and has a swift current, but its navigation is somewhat impeded by stones and rapids. The Tista begins to swell in spring, and usually rises two or three inches between the middle of April and the middle of May, owing to the melting of the snow in the mountains to the north; but no considerable increase takes place in its volume until the setting in of the rainy season. Immediately below Jalpaiguri town, the Tista has the Company's territory on both sides, and receives from the west a small river named the Karla, on the western bank of which Jalpaiguri is situated. This stream takes its rise from among the lower hills in the Sikkim territory, and flows through the district for about twenty-four miles. Canoes frequent it in the dry season, and in the floods large boats are able to ascend it for a considerable distance. A short distance below this, on the west bank of the Tista, is the mart of Madarganj. Although here a very large river, boats of a greater burden than 150 maunds cannot ascend the Tista beyond this point in the dry season. In the rains boats of any size may come. A little below Madarganj, the Tista sends off a branch known as the Buri or Old Tista, and which at the time of Major Rennel's Survey was its principal channel. On sending off the Old Tista, the great channel turns eastward; and after passing Byankra, a mart in Pakirganj division, it receives the Kayā, a small stream which rises in Bhutān, and has on its banks a place of some trade called Jorpokri. The Tista then enters Cooch Behār.'

The
Jaldhākā.

The Jaldhākā river rises in the Bhutān hills and drains the eastern slopes of the Rishi-la mountain in the Darjeeling district, of which it forms the boundary. After entering Jalpaiguri, it flows in a southerly direction until it approaches the boundary of the district, where it takes a sweep to the east and enters Cooch Behār territory. It joins the Torsā in the Rangpur district and the combined rivers under the name of the Dharla flow into the Tista. About a mile north of the Bengal-Duārs railway line the Jaldhākā divides into two branches, the western of which is called the Hāthinala; these are spanned by two fine bridges each 600 feet long joined by a lofty embankment. The streams unite again

about half a mile below the bridges. The Jaldhākā is a wide river but shallow in proportion to its size and is fordable everywhere during the cold weather; its current is very rapid and it rises and falls with great suddenness; some account of the flood in 1906 will be found later on. Its principal tributaries within the Jalpāiguri district are the Murti, a considerable stream, flowing from the Dālinkot mountains in Darjeeling; and the Dāinā, also a large stream, which rises in the Bhutān hills and falls into it on its east bank in *parganā* Morāghāt, opposite Nāothōā Hāt. The Dāinā is a particularly troublesome river, frequently changing its course and doing much damage to roads and cultivation. The Jaldhākā river is the boundary between the Māinaguri and Fālākātā *tahsils*.

The Duduyā is formed by the combined waters of the Gāir-kātā, Nanāi, Angrabāshā and other small streams, all of which rise in the north-west of the Duārs. It flows in a south-easterly direction and enters the Cooch Behār State at Dakālikobā Hāt. It is navigable by boats of fifty maunds as far as the Jalpāiguri-Alipur road. Its principal tributaries are the Kalua or Rehti, Barābank, Dim-Dima and Tāsāti, which rise in the Bhutān hills or the north of the Duārs and join it on its east or left bank.

The Duduyā

The Mujnāi rises in the southern slopes of the Bhutān hills near Hantapārā and, after a winding southerly course, enters Cooch Behār just below Fālākātā, up to which point it is navigable by boats of fifty maunds burden. There is a good road between Fālākātā and Hantapārā and the Lankapārā and Hantapārā tea estates cart most of their tea along it, putting it on country boats at Fālākātā and thence floating it down the Mujnāi to the Brāhmaputra near Dhubri. The river is the boundary between *parganās* Lakshmipur and West Madāri of the Fālākātā *tahsil*.

The Mujnāi.

The Torsā rises in the Chumbi valley of Tibet, where it is called the Māchu, and flows through Bhutān. It enters British territory by the Bala Duār and flows south through the Western Duārs, separating the Fālākātā and Alipur *tahsils*; it enters Cooch Behār at the village of Nekobarpārā. It is a large river and brings down much water in the rains. Its tributaries on the right or west bank are numerous small streams, none of which are of much importance, and on the left bank the Hānsimārā; the latter may be more properly described as a branch of the main stream, for it is thrown off by the Torsā, just above the point where that river enters the Western Duārs and, after a course parallel to it of about 15 miles, it rejoins the parent stream.

The Torsā.

In his report on Bhutān written in 1866, Lieutenant C. M. MacGregor gave the following description of the Torsā river:—

‘The Torsa or Am-Mochu river is one of the principal rivers in Bhutān and takes its rise in the Chumulāri range. Its total course from this point to where it issues into the plains at Bala Duār is said to be not less than 160 miles, of which some 70

miles are in Tibetan territory, where it waters the valley of Phare, passing by that place and by Chumbi and Rinchingāon, between which places it is crossed by numerous bridges communicating with the valleys on either bank. At Chumbi it is declared to be a deep and swift river, some forty yards broad; thence it continues flowing south for some 15 miles, where it first enters Bhutān territory, and being confined between high, precipitous and rocky banks, it rushes past with great fury. It then flows on, and a mile or two above the point where it is crossed by the road from Dālīnkot, it gives a turn to the east. It is here crossed by a bridge, which is described as a compound of a suspension and pier bridge, and Eden informs us that it is here "a very beautiful river," deep, very rapid, and broad; full of enormous boulders which make it one continuous line of white, sparkling foam. Its height at this point is 3,849 feet, and it runs through a beautiful small valley, receiving on its left, a short way down, the Sukchu, a small torrent, and immediately afterwards the Sechu. From this last point it changes its direction south-east and continues rushing impetuously on, enclosed again between high precipitous cliffs, and receiving at some twenty miles the Samchu, its first considerable feeder, and which rises in the Tegong-la. Some seven miles beyond, it is crossed by a bridge on the main road from Pāro to Chamurchi; thence its course becomes still more southerly till just before reaching the Bala it turns once more due east. At this point it takes the name of the Torsā, and is, even in dry weather, a fierce, swift river having an average depth of not less than 4 feet and being fordable only with very great difficulty. Just where it takes its last turn to the east in the mountains, it is joined by the Penchu, a large mountain stream rising in the Loomla.

The Kāl jāni.

The Kāl jāni is formed by the combined waters of the Alāikuri and Dimā, which first take the name of Kāl jāni after their junction at Alipur, the subdivisional head-quarters. The united stream has a course of only a few miles in the Western Duārs, and for a few miles further its right bank marks the boundary between the district of Jalpāiguri and the Cooch Behār State. The Kāl jāni proper has no tributaries of any importance on its right or west bank; but on the left or east bank it receives the waters of the Nonāi, Cheko and Gadādhār. The Alāikuri, which supplies the greatest portion of the water to the Kāl jāni, is a fairly large river, which rises in the Bhutān hills, and after a southerly and south-easterly course through the Western Duārs, joins the Dimā at Alipur. Its principal tributaries on the west or right bank are the Gābur Basrā, Burī Basrā and Bāniā rivers and on the east or left bank, the Nimtījhorā and Paror. The Dimā is also a stream of some size, rising in the lower Bhutān hills near Buxā, and flowing south to its confluence with the Alāikuri. Its only tributaries of any importance are the Garm on the right or west bank, and

the Doriā on the left or east. The Alāiknri and Kālajāni rivers mark the boundary between *paraganās* Chakwakheti and Buxā.

In recent years the Kālajāni has been cutting away its bank on the Alipur side, and threatening the civil station; some spurs were constructed by the Public Works Department in the hope of turning the stream but these have been entirely washed away, and if the river continues in the same direction, the question of removing the head-quarters of the Alipur Duār subdivision will have to be considered.

The Kālajāni is navigable for large boats up to Alipur and a considerable trade in timber is carried on by means of them.

The next large stream to the east is the Rāidhak, which rises close to mount Chumatarhi in Tibet. It flows southwards through the Western Duārs and enters Cooch Behār below *taluk* Buruj-kūti. In its northern course through the district the river forms a large island by throwing off a branch stream called the Māinnagaon nadi, which leaves the Rāidhak at the point where it enters the district and joins it again about ten miles lower down. The old course of the Rāidhak forms the boundary between the Alipur and Bhālka tahsils, but in 1905 the river came down in high flood and deserted its former bed which lies to the east of the Rāidhak Tea-garden; it swept across country and poured its waters into several small streams to the west of its former course, one of which the Dharlajhora, is now the main stream and runs to the west of the Rāidhak Tea-garden.

The Rāidhak.

The right bank of the Sankos river is the boundary of the district and, before the partition, marked the boundary between the provinces of Bengal and Assam. Its principal tributary on its right or west bank is the Glentāni. Both the Rāidhak and Sankos flow into the Brāhmaputra, a few miles below Dhubri.

The Sankos.

With the exception of the Buxā hills, the district is covered by alluvial deposits consisting of coarse gravels near the hills, sandy clay and sand along the course of the rivers, and fine sand consolidating into clay in the flatter parts of the river plain. The Buxā hills are composed of a series of beds, named after Buxā, which consist of variegated slates, quartzites and dolomites, and are fringed on the south by low hills of upper tertiary strata. Limestone occurs in considerable quantities in the Buxā hills and masses of calcareous tufa are found along their base. Copper ore occurs in greenish slate with quartzose layers to the west of Buxā and a mine used to be worked by Nepālis at Chunābāti about two miles away but was abandoned as it did not pay. Copper ores are also found four miles north of Sām Sing Tea Estate, close to the boundary between the Jalpāiguri and Darjeeling districts. Building stone of good quality can be procured in the Buxā hills. There is a mineral spring near Buxā, about three miles from Tashigāon, where Bhutiās suffering from skin diseases go and bathe.

GEOLOGY.

BOTANY.

In the permanently settled portion of the district and in the south of the Duārs, there is not much tree vegetation except in the Bāikanthpur forest. The numerous hamlets are surrounded by thickets of trees and shrubs, partly planted and partly of spontaneous growth, in which mango, jack, pipal and tamarind trees frequently occur; bamboos thrive luxuriantly and the numerous clumps of these form a conspicuous feature in the landscape and add greatly to its beauty. The red cotton tree or simul (*Bombax malabaricum*) is common and the graceful betel-nut palms are to be seen in almost every village. Along the north of the Duārs are large tracts of reserved forest of which a description is given further on; these decline southwards into plains of heavy grass jungle but in the last ten years much of this has disappeared, and the land is now under cultivation. Many varieties of orchids are to be found in the forests and a curious creeper, the Pāni lahrā (*Vitis repanda*), from the stem of which cold sweet water can be obtained, climbs in and out round the tree trunks.

FAUNA.

The Jalpāiguri district has always been famous for its big game and, though the heavy grass and reed jungle which is the favourite resort of wild animals is steadily diminishing owing to the extension of cultivation, the sanctuary afforded by the numerous reserved forests will prevent game from being killed out and the district will always afford good sport.

Among the larger carnivora are the tiger (*Felis tigris*), the leopard (*Felis pardus*) and the clouded leopard (*Felis diardi*). The tiger is found all over the Western Duārs, in the neighbourhood of the forests; the most famous shooting-ground is on the east bank of the Jaldhākā river opposite Rāmsāi Hāt where Lord Curzon shot several tigers in 1904. Tigers are also occasionally seen west of the Tista and one was shot in 1907 in a small patch of scrub jungle about four miles from Jalpāiguri, not far from the southern extremity of the Bāikanthpur forest. Man-eaters are almost unknown; in the few cases in which human beings have been killed by tigers, the corpses were left untouched; game and cattle are so numerous in the district that tigers are not driven to eat human flesh. The largest tiger, which has been shot in the Western Duārs, measured 10' 2". Leopards are common all over the district, any small patch of scrub jungle gives them cover and they do much harm to the villagers by carrying off their cows, goats, pigs and dogs; they are far bolder than tigers and attack with less provocation. On one occasion the Assistant Manager of a tea-garden was riding a bicycle along a well frequented road, when, from a patch of jungle close to the tea, a leopard sprang on him, knocked him off his machine, and clawed him badly. On another, a Mech, cutting firewood in the jungle was attacked by a leopard, which he killed with his dāo after a hard struggle; he was brought into the

hospital at Alipur Duār very badly mauled about the head but recovered after some months. The clouded leopard is very rare and is found only in the Buxā hills. A black leopard was shot about five miles from Jalpāiguri in 1906 by the Superintendent of Police. The leopard cat (*Felis bengalensis*) and the jungle cat (*Felis chaus*) are common, as are also the larger civet cat (*Viverra zibetha*) and the smaller civet cat (*Viverra malaccensis*). The genus *Canis* is represented by the jackal (*Canis aureus*) and the genus *Cyon* by the wild dog (*Cyon rutilans*). Wild dogs are seldom met with and no report of damage done by them has been received in recent years. The only representative of the genus *Vulpis* is the Indian fox (*Vulpis bengalensis*).

The order Ungulata comprises the elephant (*Elephas indicus*), the wild pig (*Sus indicus*) and various Ruminantia including the rhinoceros, bison, wild buffalo, and many kinds of deer. Elephants are found in considerable numbers throughout the forests and appear to have increased in recent years; they come down from the hills in large numbers about the time when the rains break in June and again in November when the rice crops are ripening, on which occasions they do considerable damage. Solitary males, both tuskers and muknas, are a serious menace to life in the tracts through which they roam, and no less than five have been proclaimed in the last two years. One of these, a tusker, appeared at Madāri Hāt in March 1905; he pulled down several houses, charged the engine-shed, making a large hole in the masonry wall, damaged a first-class carriage standing in the railway station, and injured several people. He was next heard of at the Hantapārā Tea-garden where he killed a woman, after which he disappeared and was at last shot in December 1907 by the Assistant Manager of the Chuapārā Tea-garden, where he had chased the coolies from their work. On the road through the forest to Buxā, it was found impossible to use telegraph posts as the elephants pulled them down as fast as they were put up, and the wire is now attached to large trees. The Manager of the Bengal-Duārs Railway also complained of telegraph posts along the line through the forest between Latiguri and Rāmshāi Hāt stations having been pulled down by elephants. The wild pig is common throughout the district and its flesh is eaten by Rāj-bansis, Meches, Gāros and Nepālis. Rhinoceros, buffalo and bison were in danger of being shot out, and, to prevent their extinction, they are now protected in the reserved forests. The *Rhinoceros indicus*, *Rhinoceros sondaicus* and *Rhinoceros malayan* are all found in the district; the last named is very rare but has been shot in the Dalgāon forest. The *Rhinoceros indicus* appears to be increasing and I have myself seen over twenty fresh rhinoceros beds while shooting in a grass jungle north of Silitorsā. Buffalo are not numerous but bison (*Bos gaurus* and *Bos frontalis*) are found from time to time. Of the deer tribe, the

sambhar (*Rusa aristotelis*) is often seen in the forest, hog deer (*Axis porcinus*), swamp deer (*Rucernus devauecellii*) and barking deer (*Cervulus aureus*) are still common in the district though their numbers are decreasing as cultivation extends. A few spotted deer or chital (*Axis maculatus*) are still to be found in the forests to the north of the Alipur and Bhalka tahsils.

The Ursidæ are represented by the Himālayan black bear (*Ursus tibetanus*) and the common Indian sloth-bear (*Ursus labiatus*). The Himalayan black bear is fierce and readily attacks without provocation anyone who gets in its way; it is not uncommon to hear of villagers being killed by this bear and in Mech villages men may often be seen who have been mauled badly. Mr. Ainslie, the Subdivisional Officer of Alipur Duār, who has shot several, told me that he has never seen a tiger fight so hard as one of these did; it charged the beating elephants, seized one of them by the hind leg, and went on charging and fighting till it was killed. Other mammalia found in the district are the common Indian hare (*Lepus ruficaudatus*), the hispid hare (*Lepus hispidus*) which is very rare, monkeys, squirrels, otters, porcupines and several of the smaller rodents.

The following is a list of the larger wild animals found in Jalpaiguri district:—

- The tiger (*Felix tigris*).
- The leopard (*Felix pardus*).
- The clouded leopard (*Felix diardi*).
- The leopard cat (*Felix bengalensis*).
- The jungle cat (*Felix chaus*).
- The larger civet cat (*Viverra zibetha*).
- The smaller civet cat (*Viverra malaccensis*).
- The jackal (*Canis aureus*).
- The wild dog (*Cyon rutilans*).
- The Indian fox (*Vulpis bengalensis*).
- The elephant (*Elephas indicus*).
- The wild pig (*Sus indicus*).
- The Rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros indicus*).
- (*Rhinoceros sardaicus*).
- (*Rhinoceros malayan*).
- The wild buffalo.
- The bison (*Bos gaurus*).
- (*Bos frontalis*).
- The sambhar (*Rusa aristotelis*).
- The swamp deer (*Rucernus Devauecellii*).
- The hog deer (*Axis porcinus*).
- The barking deer (*Cervulus aureus*).
- The spotted deer or chital (*Axis maculatus*).
- The Himalayan black bear (*Ursus tibetanus*).
- The common Indian sloth bear (*Ursus labiatus*).
- The hispid hare (*Lepu shispidus*).

- The Bengal monkey (*Macacus rhesus*).
- The black squirrel (*Sciurus giganteus*).
- The grey squirrel (*Sciurus lokriah*).
- The common Indian squirrel (*Sciurus palmarum*).
- The Indian Porcupine (*Hystrix lencura*).
- The otter (*Lutia nair*).

Game birds used to abound in the Western Duārs but many species are getting scarce as the grass lands are being brought under cultivation. The Indian pea-fowl (*Pavo cristatus*) is still common particularly in the jungles east of the Jaldhākā and Torsā rivers; the Indian bustard (*Euphoditis edwardsi*) and the floriken (*Sypheotis bengalensis*) are becoming scarcer, but are still fairly numerous in the cold weather in grass jungle on high land; the lesser floriken or likh (*Sypheotis aurita*) is also met with. The Kalij pheasant (*Gennaeus leucomelanus*) is common in the forest north of the Meenglas tea-garden and the Moonal pheasant (*Lophophorus impeyanus*) may be found occasionally in the Sinchula hills near Buxā. Partridge were common everywhere, but many of the best shooting grounds have been brought under cultivation in recent years and there are nothing like so many as there used to be. The black partridge (*Francolinus vulgaris*), the swamp partridge (*Ortygornis gularis*) and the grey partridge (*Ortygornis poniceriana*) are still fairly common and the hill partridge (*Arboricola torqueola*) is found in the hills near Buxā. The red jungle fowl (*Gallus ferrugineus*) may be seen feeding in the early morning and at sunset on the edges of the forests. The green pigeon (*Crocopus phaenicopterus*) is common all over the district and the Imperial pigeon (*Carcophaga sylvatica*) is found in the forests. Snipe, duck and quail are also fairly numerous.

Game birds.

Many varieties of snakes are found in the district. The hamadryad or king cobra (*Ophiophagus elaps*) and the python (*Python molurus*) are numerous in the forests of the Western Duārs, where large specimens are occasionally shot. The common cobra (*Naia tripudians*) the karait (*Bungarus cerulia*), the banded karait (*Bungarus fasciatus*), Russell's viper (*Daboia russellii*), the phursa (*Echis carinata*) and one of the pit vipers (*Trimeresurus carinatus*) are met with throughout the district. The common grass snake and several species of water snakes are also very common.

Snakes.

The numerous rivers and streams in the district contain many varieties of fish of which the mahseer, rohu and katli are the biggest. Other large species are the chital, boal, kalbaus, karusa, and raicheng. There are very few families who live solely by fishing, but Rājbañsis, Muhammadans, Meches, and Nepālis, all catch fish in addition to their other occupations. Illustrations of the principal appliances used for catching fish are given on the next page; the drawings were kindly furnished by Babu Balaram Das Gupta, *tuhsildār* of Māinaguri. Meches poison fish

Fish

in small rivers and still water; they use a jungle creeper called Ru-gabdi; which they cut into pieces about a foot in length; these pieces are tied into a bundle and well beaten in the water. Mahseer fishing used to be particularly good in the higher reaches of the Jaldhākā, Torsā, Rāidhak and Sankos rivers and big fish are still caught occasionally. The fishing has much deteriorated in recent years, partly owing to persistent netting, but also to dynamiting of the rivers by Nepālis. Dynamite is issued for blasting purposes to contractors working on the hill roads in the Darjeeling district and it is said that the coolies steal some of it and use it or sell it for killing fish. On one occasion the police searched the house of a Nepāli near Dām Dim and found him in possession of five sticks of dynamite and five detonators.

CLIMATE.

The seasons in the Jalpaiguri district follow generally the course of those of other districts in the plains but, owing to its proximity to the hills, the rainfall is much heavier and the temperature is rarely excessive. November, December, and January are the driest months, though even in these some rain usually falls; during the last six years, only two months, November and December 1903, have been altogether without rain. In consequence of this heavy and widespread rainfall the district never presents a dried-up appearance but is always green and the growth of vegetation is most luxuriant. The early cold weather months are delightful; the atmosphere is clear and fine and views of the snows are seen; in January and February it is colder and there are often slight mists; by the end of March it begins to get warmer, and is very hot in April, in years when the rainfall is light in that month. In May the average rainfall is about 12 inches and the month is usually comparatively cool; the rains are very heavy in June, July and August, and the atmosphere is saturated with moisture.

Jalpaiguri has an unenviable reputation for fever; in the tract adjoining Dinājpur, a very severe type of malarious fever is prevalent, while in the Western Duārs the dreaded black-water fever claims many victims, and seldom a year passes without several deaths among Europeans from that cause. So serious has the mortality been among the planting community that Government has ordered an enquiry into the reasons why black-water fever is so common in the Western Duārs, and it is hoped to trace the origin of the disease and to find some method of preventing or at least diminishing its ravages. In the ten years ending in 1901, Jalpaiguri figured among the six districts of Bengal with the highest recorded mortality, from fever, in that Province.

Temperature.

Temperature is rarely excessive. It is lowest in January when the mean temperature is 62°; by April the mean temperature has risen to 79° and after that it gradually increases till it reaches its highest point 83° in July and August. The mean maximum temperature occurs in April and is 90°; the mean

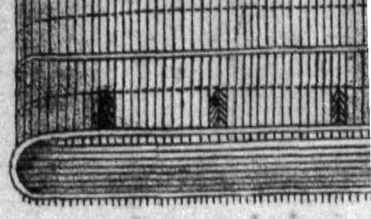
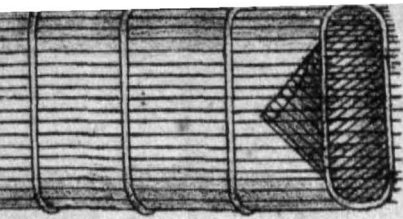


Fig. 4
JAKHOI

Fig. 5
THORKO

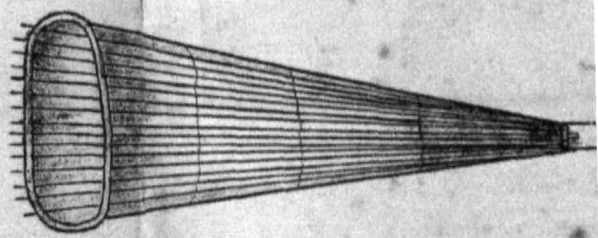
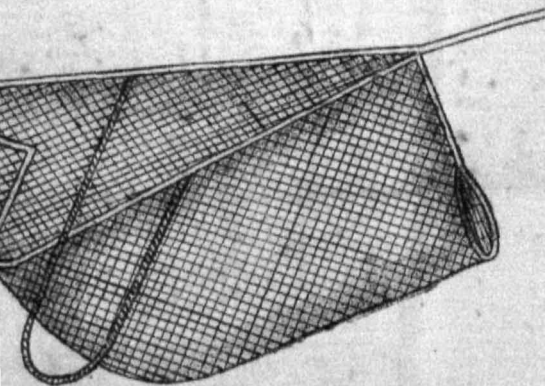


Fig. 6
KOCHA

Fig. 7
SIP

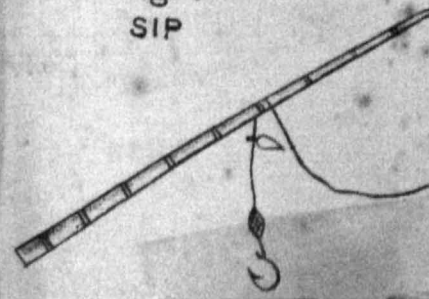
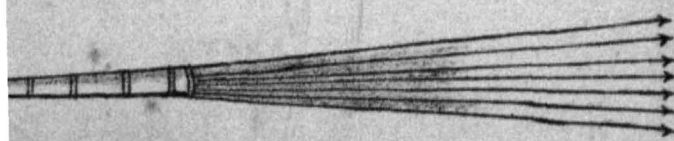


Fig. 8
DARKY

Fig. 9
BEKY

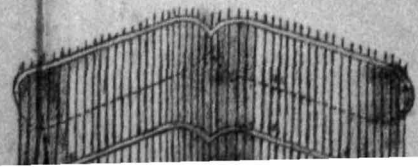
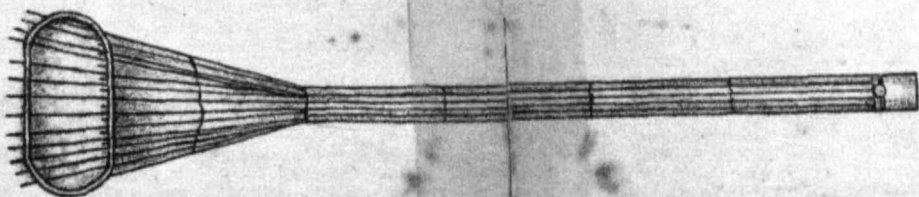




Fig. 12
DHOIKA



B. D. Gupta, B.A.,
Tehsildar, Mainagu
20-

minimum is in January and is 51° , so that the mean annual range of temperature is 39° . The highest recorded temperature was 102.5° in 1899 and the lowest 36° in 1887. On the 9th and 10th of February 1905 the lowest recorded temperature at Jalpāiguri town was 39° , but it must have been considerably colder in the Western Duārs; on both dates there were frosts at night and a fine tobacco crop was frost-bitten and nearly ruined.

At Buxā Cantonment the climate is quite different; the rainfall is heavier and even in the hottest weather punkahs are not used and blankets are necessary at night. The tea-garden area to the north of the district is generally cooler than the regulation tracts west of the Tista river.

The heaviest rainfall in the Jalpāiguri district is at the foot of the hills, and the lowest in the south on the borders of Rangpur. The town of Jalpāiguri occupies a position intermediate between the two, and though it has a heavier rainfall than Darjeeling, the fall is much less than in the north of the Western Duārs. Rain falls in almost every month of the year; it is lightest in the cold weather months, rather more heavy in March, and increases considerably in April. May may almost be considered a rainy month and precipitation is often very heavy. From June to September rainfall is general; the monsoon current flows northwards and is deflected towards the west in Northern Bengal so that the prevailing direction of the wind at Jalpāiguri during the rains is east or south-east. During this period the rainfall at Jalpāiguri is 119.41 inches, at Alipur Duār 122.66, at Buxā Cantonment 176.76 and at the Sām Sing tea-garden, about 1,500 feet above sea-level, 184.55 inches. In the south at Debiganj, the average is only 69.65. The highest recorded rainfall was 249.92 inches at Buxā in 1903; in August 1905 at the same place no less than 94.58 inches of rain fell. The driest year at Jalpāiguri was 1900, when the rainfall was only 84 inches. Statistics of the rainfall at the recording stations of Jalpāiguri, Debiganj, Patharjhorā, a garden close to the hills on the Darjeeling boundary, Sām Sing, Alipur Duār and Buxā are given below; the figures are the averages recorded during the five years from 1903-04 to 1907-08:—

Station.	Novem- ber to February	March to May.	June to October.	Annual Average.
Jalpāiguri ...	2.20	17.74	119.41	139.35
Debiganj ...	1.24	10.46	69.65	81.35
Patharjhorā ...	3.22	27.80	171.92	202.94
Sām Sing ...	5.31	35.33	184.55	225.19
Alipur Duār ...	1.38	16.70	122.66	140.74
Buxā ...	4.22	25.68	176.76	206.66

CHAPTER II.

HISTORY.

PREHISTORIC
TIMES.

In prehistoric times the Jalpāiguri district formed part of the kingdom of Prāgyotisha, or, as it was afterwards called, Kāmṛūp, which extended as far west as the Karātoyā river. The third of the Assam kings, mentioned in the Joginī Tantra, the first of whom flourished in the first century A.D., was Jalpeshwar. According to one legend the Jalpes linga appeared first in his time and he built a temple on the site of the present temple at Jalpes. The next king mentioned by tradition is Prithu Rājā, the extensive remains of whose capital may still be seen at Bhitargarh, south of the road from Jalpāiguri to Titālya. After him we hear of a prince named Dharma Pāl, who is said to have ruled West Kāmṛūp up to the Brāhmaputra; traces of his rule can still be found in the Cooch Behār State. There was then a change of dynasty; the three kings of the new house were Nilādhwāj, Chakradhwāj and Nilāmbar, the first of whom founded Kamātāpur, the ruins of which are still to be found in Cooch Behār. This dynasty fell before an invasion by Husain Shāh, the Afghan Governor of Bengal, who ruled from 1497—1521 A.D. Husain Shāh subsequently undertook an expedition into Assam with disastrous results and his failure was followed by an incursion of the wild hill tribes, the most prominent of whom were the Koch.

THE KOCHES.

In the 16th century the Koches under Visu Singh, the ancestor of the present rulers of Cooch Behār, founded an empire which extended from Darrang in the upper valley of the Brāhmaputra to the boundary of the Purnea district. The Koch kingdom did not last long, but is represented at the present time by the Cooch Behār State and two large *zamindāris*, the Chakrajāt estates, belonging to His Highness the Mahārājā of Cooch Behār, and the Baikānthpur estate, which between them cover nearly the whole of the permanently settled portion of the Jalpāiguri district. The Rāikats of Bāikānthpur are a collateral branch of the Cooch Behār family, and they, themselves, claim to be the senior branch; the family tradition is that one of the great chiefs, at the time when the Koches were rising into power, was named Hajo. He had two daughters, Jira and Hira; Hira gave birth to two sons, the elder of whom Sisu was the founder of the Rāikat family, while the younger Visu is the ancestor of the Mahārājā of Cooch Behār. Sisu became his brother's prime minister and commander of his army; he obtained from him the whole of the Bāikānthpur pargana, which was wrested from the king of Garo, and after his death, the Rāikats became more and more powerful until, in the

reign of Rājā Bir Narain (1621—1625), they ceased to be tributary to Cooch Behār. About 1680 they acted as protectors of the Cooch Behār State and for the time being completely overshadowed it. In 1687 they agreed to pay tribute to the Subhā of Bengal and eventually became *zamindārs* under the East India Company. The big Koch kingdom soon fell into decay; the Mughals were rapidly extending their power eastwards, and in 1603 conquered and annexed nearly the whole of the territory of the Koch kings. A desperate struggle took place for the possession of *parganās* Pātgrām and Bodā until, at the beginning of the 18th century, they were nominally ceded to the Muhammadans, though they were farmed out to a cousin of the Cooch Behār Rājā, who held them on his behalf. Under the Mughal rule, these conquests were included in the frontier Faujdārī of Fakirkundi or Rangpur and were transferred to the East India Company with the cession of the *divān* in 1765.

Until 1869 when the district of Jalpāiguri was formed, this area, comprising *parganās* Bāikanthpur, Bodā, and Pātgrām, was administered as part of the Rangpur district, a frontier tract bordering on Nepāl, Bhutān and Cooch Behār. The Muhammadan practice of farming out the land revenue to contractors was continued until in 1783 the exactions of a notorious farmer, Rājā Debi Singh of Dinājpur, ended in the open rebellion of the cultivators. The enormous area committed to his charge and the weakness of the administrative staff made it impossible for the Collector to assert his authority in the remote corners of his district which became the *Alsatia* of handitti whom he could not suppress. A small British force sent against them was checked and the leader of another party, Captain Thomas, was cut off; in the end four battalions had to be employed. In 1789 these predatory hands were broken up; the Collector conducted a regular campaign against them, and succeeded in blockading them in the great Bāikanthpur forest with a force of 200 *barkandazes*. They were compelled to surrender, and in a single year, no less than 549 robbers were brought to trial.

THE
BEGINNING
OF BRITISH
RULE.

Meanwhile the Duārs, or strip of country running along the base of the hills, had passed into the possession of the Bhutias, who controlled the whole tract, from the frontier of Sikkim as far east as Darrang, and frequently enforced claims of suzerainty over the enfeebled State of Cooch Behār. They did not occupy the country permanently, probably because Bhutias cannot stand the heat of the plains, but exacted a heavy tribute and subjected the unfortunate inhabitants to the cruellest treatment. Bhutian belonged to a tribe whom the present Bhutias call Tephus and who are supposed to have been the ancestors of the people of Cooch Behār. More than 200 years ago, some Tibetan soldiers are said to have conquered the Tephus and taken permanent possession of their country.

THE
BHUTIAS.

The present ruler of Bhutān is His Highness Sir Ugyen Wangchuk, K.C.I.E., Mahārāja of Bhutān and Tongsa Penlop; his former title was Ku-Sho Chō-Tai-pa (lit: the honourable calculator of religious affairs). He was elected hereditary ruler of Bhutān on the 17th December 1907 on which occasion the Government of India sent a British Mission to Bhutān. Before the rise of the Tongsa Penlop to the supreme power, the country was nominally governed by the Dharma and Deb Rājās. The Dharma Rājā is believed to be the re-incarnation of Dup-gein Shap-trung, the first Dharma Rājā. "Dharma Rājā" is an English and Indian term, the Blutiā and Tibetan name being Shap-trung Rim-poche (lit: the precious servant). He was originally not only the spiritual but in theory also the secular head of the state; but one of his successors, considering that temporal and spiritual powers were incompatible, confined himself entirely to the latter and appointed a minister to wield the former. The minister by degrees became the temporal ruler of Bhutān and was styled De-Ba (Deb Rājā) and De-Si, both of which terms mean "Administrator of a country."

During the interval between the death of the Dharma Rājā and his re-appearance, or rather until he had arrived at years of discretion after his last birth, the office was held by a spiritual chief called Lama Te-pu. The Lama Te-pu is head of the Lamas, and was allowed a perpetual regency through his *avatar*s, during the periodical disappearance from the world of the Dharma Rājā. The Deb Rājā was in theory elected by the Council and held his office for three years; at one time he had a certain amount of power, but latterly was merely a puppet, the nominee of the most powerful Penlop or Jongpen for the time being. For about the last 50 years the Penlops of Tongsa have had the greatest influence in the nomination of the Deb Rājā. The Deb Rājā was supposed to be assisted by a Council called the Lonchen, composed of the following members:—

- (1) The Lam Zim-pön, Chief Secretary to the Dharma Rājā;
- (2) Deo-nyer Zim-pön, Private Secretary to the Deb Rājā;
- (3) Tim-bu Jong-pen, Governor of Tra-shi Cho-dzong;
- (4) Punakha Jong-pen, Governor of Punakha;
- (5) Angdupotang Jong-pen, Governor of Angdupotang;
- (6) Deb Zim-pön, Chief Secretary to the Deb Rājā;
- (7) Shung Dro-nyer, Master of the Household.

In addition to these, there were three extraordinary members who attended the Council when they happened to be present at the capital and who were liable to be called on to attend in cases of emergency; their collective title was the Chen-lah. They were—the Tongsa Penlop, the Paro Penlop, and the Taka Penlop. In the summer the seat of Government was in Tra-shi Chō-dzong, and in the winter at Punakha.

What rule existed was in the hands of the Penlops of Tongsa Paro, and Taka; since the cession of the Duārs the importance of the Taka Penlop has diminished and he is now a very insignificant officer. About 50 years ago, Deb Na-Gia, the father of the present ruler, gained the ascendancy and consolidated the power of his family over the other Penlops. This power his son, Mahārāja Ugyen Wangchuk, has upheld.

Until 1905 our political relations with Bhutān were controlled by the Bengal Government through the Commissioner of the Rājshāhi division. During the Tibet Mission they were placed in charge of the British Commissioner, Colonel (now Sir Francis) Younghusband, directly under the Government of India, and since the 9th June 1905 the Political Officer in Sikkim has been in political charge of Bhutān in addition to Sikkim and Tibet and is directly under the control of the Government of India.*

The British Government first came into contact with Bhutān in 1772. The Bhutiās invaded the Cooch Behār State and, on its Rājā applying for help, a force was sent to his assistance which drove out the invaders and pursued them into their own territories. Through the intercession of the Regent of Tibet, a treaty of peace between the East India Company and Bhutān was concluded in 1774. A few years later in 1783 an attempt was made to promote commercial intercourse with Bhutān, but Captain Turner's mission to that State proved unsuccessful. After this there was little intercourse until the occupation of Assam by the English in 1826. It was then found that the Bhutiās had seized several tracts of country lying at the foot of the mountains, called the Duārs or passes. They agreed to pay a small tribute, but failed to do so and used their command of the passes to raid into British territory. In consequence of this Captain Pemberton was sent to Bhutān, but his negotiations yielded no definite result and, as all attempts to obtain redress and ensure security to the inhabitants failed, the Assam or Eastern Duārs were wrested from the Bhutiās, and the British Government agreed to pay them Rs. 10,000 a year as compensation for the loss, subject to their good behaviour. No improvement resulted; the Bhutiās continued to commit outrages on British subjects in the Duārs, and scarcely a year passed without the occurrence of several raids on British territory, headed by Bhutā officials, in which the inhabitants were plundered, killed or carried off as slaves. The following description of the Bhutān war and the annexation of the Duārs is taken from the official account published in the "Summary of Affairs in the Foreign Department of the Government of India, from 1864 to 1869":—

'In the cold weather of 1863, Mr. Ashley Eden, C.S., was sent as an envoy to Bhutān, to put a stop to these depredations

The Bhutān War.

* For the above account of Bhutān, I am indebted to Mr. C. A. Bell, I.C.S., Political Officer in Sikkim.

and outrages and to demand reparation. In April 1864, Mr. Eden returned from Bhutān and reported the ill-success of his mission. He had failed to obtain from the Government of Bhutān either satisfaction for past injuries or security for the future. He had been subjected to gross insults, and obliged by force to sign two papers, agreeing to make over the Assam and Bengal Duārs to Bhutān, and to surrender all run-away slaves and political offenders. It appeared that the Deb and Dharam Rājās were in reality mere puppets, and that the chief power in the State had been usurped by the Tongsa Penlop; and that it was the Tongsa Penlop and his faction who had treated the envoy with indignity. On Mr. Eden's return, the Government at once disavowed the treaty which he had been forced to sign, suspended all communications with the Bhutān Government, and strengthened the police force on the frontier. In June, the Government addressed letters to the Deb and Dharam Rājās, announcing the permanent annexation of the district of Ambāri Fālākātā (the Bengal Duārs), and declaring that the annual payments previously made by the British Government to Bhutān, of Rs. 2,000 as rent for Ambāri Fālākātā, and of Rs. 10,000 as revenue from the Assam Duārs, had ceased for ever. The letters demanded also the release of all British subjects, as well as subjects of Cooch Behār and Sikkim, numbering in all, it was said, more than 300 persons, who had been detained in Bhutān against their will; and the restoration of all property which had been carried off from British territory, or Cooch Behār or Sikkim, within the previous five years. The letters concluded by stating that, unless these demands were fully met by the commencement of the ensuing September, further measures would be taken to enforce them. To these demands, the Deb Rājā in whose name all official communications from the Bhutān Government were usually made, sent no reply whatever. In August, however, a letter was received from the Dharam Rājā, offering no apologies for the gross insults offered to the envoy, and altogether ignoring the Government's threat of coercion, but proposing to receive a fresh envoy or to send one himself. This proposition was considered to be out of the question. If the Dharam Rājā had manifested any intention of liberating the captives or of restoring the plundered property, the proposal to receive an envoy from Bhutān might have been entertained, but as it was, the action of the Bhutān authorities left no option to the British Government but to enforce its demands, and to compel the Bhutiās to respect the frontier for the future.

Accordingly, it was resolved to carry out the permanent annexation of the Bengal Duārs, amounting to an advance northward for a distance of from twenty to thirty miles along a line of about a hundred and eighty miles in length, so as to command all the passes into the plains; and at the same time to confine our

occupation to a tract of country which was peopled by a race which had no affinity with the Bhutiās and had long suffered from their tyranny, but who were closely allied with the people of Bengal, and were expected to co-operate cordially with the British authorities. On the 12th November 1864, Government issued a proclamation permanently annexing the Bengal Duārs; and it was determined that an expedition should advance in four columns, which were to take up their several posts at Diwāngiri, Sidli, Pasakhā, and Dālingkot. Instructions were also issued that no overtures from the Bhutān Government were to be taken into consideration except upon the following basis:—

(1) That the Bhutān Government surrender all the Bengal Duārs and the hill territory on the left bank of the Tista, up to such points on the water-shed lower range of hills as might be laid down by the British Commissioner. (2) That the Bhutiās give up the two documents extorted from Mr. Eden, and send a chief of rank to apologise for the flagrant misconduct towards the envoy. (3) The surrender of all captives still detained in Bhutān against their will. (4) That the Bhutān Government enter into a treaty of friendship and fair dealing for the future. In the event of these conditions being accepted, the British Government offered an annual grant of Rs. 25,000 to be hereafter increased, with reference to the prosperity of the tract annexed, up to the sum of Rs. 50,000; but this grant was to depend entirely on the will and pleasure of the British Government, and on the good conduct of the Bhutiās.

On the 7th December 1864, the four columns made a simultaneous advance; within six weeks they had driven in the Bhutiās with slight loss, and occupied eight or ten of their posts along a frontier of about 180 miles of difficult and jungly heights. Subsequent to these successes, the civil authorities set to work to introduce rule and order into the Duārs, to implant confidence in the minds of the inhabitants, and to arrange generally for the administration of the newly annexed territory. They also concerted measures in communication with the military authorities for establishing a strict blockade of the passes, with the object, by cutting off their supplies, of inducing the Bhutiās to come to terms.

Meantime in the beginning of 1865, the Bhutiās appear to have resolved on a bold effort to recover the territory they had lost, and to drive the invaders from their country. They suddenly debouched in force along the frontier, threatening the whole line of military posts excepting the western one at Dālingkot. On the 4th February 1865, the Bhutiās so far succeeded in their design as to capture the eastern post at Diwāngiri. This was the more surprising as the garrison at Diwāngiri had expelled a far more formidable attack which had been made on the 30th January. However, on the second occasion, the garrison abandoned its

position with the loss of two mountain guns; its retreat was almost entirely unmolested by the enemy. At one other post, Tājāgāon, which was apparently untenable, the commanding officer found it necessary to retire, and did so in perfect order. At all the other posts the garrisons held their own, although threatened in force by the Bhutās. On the 15th March, General Tytler re-occupied the position at Tājāgāon, and on the 2nd April General Tombs re-captured Diwangiri. With these two affairs all active operations ceased. The Bhutās lost heart, and made no further efforts to regain their ground, or to molest the force which had taken possession of the Duārs and their forts. Active hostilities were brought to a close by the setting in of the rains and the Bhutā authorities evinced an earnest inclination to come to terms. They were invariably referred to the conditions offered them in November 1864, and were told to entertain no hope that any modification would be admitted. They were also warned that, unless they acceded to these terms in their entirety, the British force would enter Bhutān in the ensuing cold weather, and exact its own conditions at Punakha and Tongsa, the Bhutā capitals. At the same time, preparations were actively pushed forward on a sufficient scale for the despatch of two columns into the heart of Bhutān, one to start from Buxā, and the other from Diwangiri; and the construction of roads into Bhutān territory was conducted with considerable energy. The Bhutān authorities were soon convinced, by the reality of these preparations, that the Government of India was in earnest, and they accepted the terms which had been offered them, with the additional stipulation that the two guns which had been abandoned in the retreat from Diwangiri, and which were then in the possession of the Tongsa Penlop, should be restored to the British Government. A treaty of peace on these terms was accordingly concluded on the 11th November 1865; and it was fairly anticipated that the material guarantee for the good conduct of the Bhutā chiefs which the Government possessed in the shape of withholding payment, either altogether or in part, of the annual grant, would secure the peace of the border and generally put a stop to the raids and scenes of rapine which were of such frequent occurrence in former years.

These expectations have been fully realised; since that time the peaceful relations between the British Government and Bhutān have been undisturbed. The annexed tracts, known as the Duārs, have steadily increased in prosperity; tea-gardens cover the country south of the hills, the cultivators are well to do, and probably in no district in India is cultivation extending faster, while the reserved forests pay a yearly increasing revenue to Government. Bhutān itself is settling down under the rule of the Tongsa Penlop and local chiefs and *kazis* are being brought under control and have no longer the power to do mischief which they possessed in former years.

The Jalpāiguri district is of comparatively recent creation and was formed in 1869. After the annexation of the Duārs in November 1864, they were divided into the Eastern and Western Duārs, the former of which now forms part of the district of Goalpārā. The Western Duārs was divided into three *tahsils*, viz.—the Sadar, comprising the tract of country between the Tista and Torsā rivers with its head-quarters at Māinaguri; the Buxā *tahsil* extending from the Torsā to the Sankos river, with its head-quarters at Alipur; and the Dālingkot *tahsil*, which includes the mountainous part of the annexed territory. Mr. F. A. Donough, Assistant Commissioner, was deputed to Māinaguri for criminal and civil work and was succeeded, after a few months, by Mr. J. Tweedie, who was appointed in 1866 the first Deputy Commissioner of the Western Duārs. Mr. Donough then went to Buxā as Civil Officer and was succeeded in 1867 by Colonel Hedāyat Ali Khān. In 1867-68 Buxā was formed into a regular subdivision. In January 1867 the Dālingkot *tahsil* was transferred to the Darjeeling district and at the same time the criminal jurisdiction of the Titālya subdivision of Rangpur, comprising the police circles of Bodā, Sanyāsikātā (now Rājganj) and Fakirganj (now Jalpāiguri), was made over to the Deputy Commissioner of the Western Duārs, the civil and revenue jurisdiction remaining with Rangpur. This arrangement lasted until January 1st, 1869, when the Titālya subdivision was separated completely from Rangpur (with the exception of the civil jurisdiction) and was united to the Western Duārs to form the district of Jalpāiguri. The Deputy Commissioner removed his headquarters from Māinaguri to Jalpāiguri town, on the west bank of the Tista, and the district was divided into two subdivisions—the Sadar, which included the former Titālya subdivision and that part of the Western Duārs, which lies between the Tista and the Jaladhākā rivers; and the Fālākātā subdivision which comprised the rest of the Buxā subdivision, the headquarters of the Subdivisional Officer being removed from Buxā to Fālākātā. The headquarters of this subdivision were again transferred to Alipur in 1876. On April 1st, 1870, the civil jurisdiction of the Titālya subdivision was vested in Jalpāiguri and the Pātgrām police circle was transferred to the Fālākātā subdivision. In 1874-75 Pātgrām was attached to the Sadar subdivision, and, since this change, the Jalpāiguri district has remained unaltered.

The only remains of antiquarian interest in the Jalpāiguri district are the fort at Bhītargarh and the Jalpes temple.

Bhītargarh was the capital of Prithu Rājā and was situated partly in Rājganj and partly in Bodā. A large tank still exists, but is much silted up and the outlines of the city may still be traced. Dr. Buchanan-Hamilton wrote the following description of it as it was when he saw it about the year 1809:—

'The city consists of four concentric enclosures. The innermost is said to have been the abode of the Rājā and appearances

BRITISH
RULE.

ARCHÆO-
LOGY.

Bhītargarh.

justify the supposition. It is a parallelogram of about 690 yards from north to south, by half as much from east to west; but at the north end a small portion is cut from its east side, in order to secure the place by an earthen rampart from any attack that might be made from a large tank that is adjacent. The defence of the other parts of the royal residence has been a brick wall. Near the middle of the area is a small tank, with a heap of bricks at each end. In the south-east corner is another tank, and one heap. In the south-west corner are two heaps containing bricks. All these heaps are small, and have probably been private places of worship; and all the other buildings were probably thatched. There is not the smallest trace of either taste, or magnificence; while the defences seem to indicate that the Government of the Rājā was insecure.

‘The tank adjacent to the citadel or palace is a considerable work; and from the great height and wideness of the banks thrown out, must be deep. It extends about 800 yards from north to south, and 700 from east to west. In the north and south ends it has two *ghats* or descents, and in the east and west sides it has three, all paved with brick. The water is still clear, and owing probably to the bottom being sand, but attributed to the holiness of the place, few weeds grow in it. The part of the bank that adjoins the palace is overgrown with trees and bushes, and is supposed to be the abode of the spirit of Prithu; for on the approach of the impure Kichoks (a gipsy tribe), it was here that he precipitated himself into the water. A flag is hoisted to denote that the ground is holy; and, on approaching my guides bowed to the ground, and called upon Mahārājā Prithu by name.

‘The inner city, which surrounds the palace and great tank, is about 1,930 yards from east to west, and 345 from north to south. Where I passed the north-east and west faces they consisted of a brick rampart, and a narrow ditch without any flanking defences, and extremely ruinous; still, however, in some parts, the bricks of the facing retain their position. Where I crossed the southern face it consisted of a very wide ditch and strong rampart of earth. The citadel is not in the centre of this inner city, but it is placed nearest to the north and west sides.

‘The middle city extends about 3,530 yards from east to west, and 6,350 from north to south, and is surrounded by a ditch and rampart of earth; but its north face, where the Tālmā enters its ditch, and flows along it so far as I traced, is strengthened by an additional rampart. Its western area is wider than its eastern, and its southern area is not so wide as that on the north. Near its southern end is a tank called Vaghpuḥori where the Rājā kept some tigers. In the northern area are shown two small heaps of bricks, which are called the house of the Rājā's minister, and from their size could only have served as the private place of worship of such a personage. In both the inner and middle cities

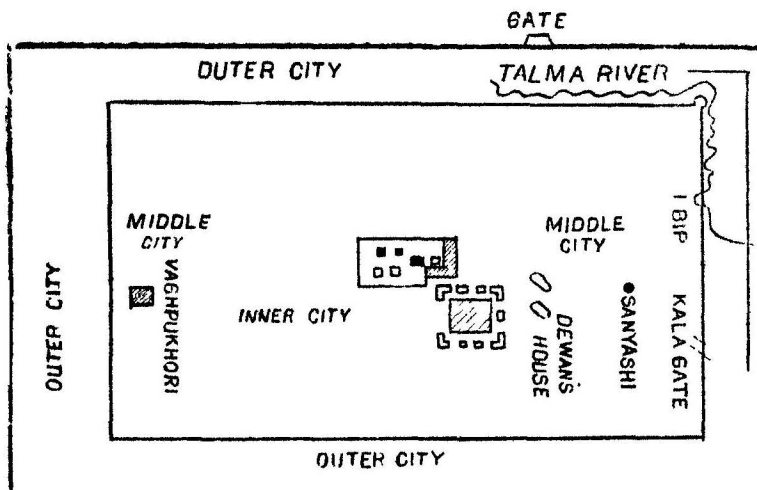
there have been subdivisions, separated by ramparts and ditches, both running parallel to the chief defences of the place, and cutting the former at right angles, and which probably divided the city into many quarters.

'The outer city is surrounded by a low rampart and ditch, and is supposed to have been occupied by the lowest of the populace, on which account it is called Harigor. It extends 300 yards from the western rampart and 570 yards from the southern rampart of the middle city. Its extent on the east escaped my notice, as I was not in expectation of finding any ruin, when I came upon it, and reached the rampart of the middle city before I was aware of the circumstance, and night approached so fast as not to admit of my returning back. Neither did I ascertain the extent of this outer city towards the north. I could not see it from the rampart of the middle city and was told that it was at such a distance as to render a day's halt necessary, if I intended to view it; and a day's halt was impracticable, as my tents had that morning gone to a distance. My guides said that the total length of the outer fort, from north to south, is six miles, which seems probable.

'There is no reason to think that in the whole city there was any public building, either religious or civil, that deserved notice; or any work of any considerable magnitude, except the defences and the tank. This shows either that the people were in a very rude state of society, or that the urgency of the state required its whole means to be exhausted on its defence. The whole seems to have been early constructed before the art of war had made any considerable progress, as there is nothing like towers, bastions or any part that can defend another; but that does not indicate a great antiquity, as Komotapoor, destroyed at the end of the 15th or beginning of the 16th century, is in a similar state. For one appearance which I observed in all the sides of the outer city, I cannot account. There are several trenches of inconsiderable depth, and perhaps 20 feet wide, which seem to extend round the whole parallel to the ditch of the middle city, and distant from each other about 40 or 50 feet. The earth that has been taken from the trenches, has been thrown on these intermediate spaces, which although evidently raised are level. They could therefore scarcely have been intended for defences; nor is it probable that regular streets would have been found in the meanest part of the

city, while no traces of such remain in the parts that were inhabited by persons of rank.*

SKETCH OF BHITARGARH.



Jalpes
temple.

The Jalpes temple is situated about four miles to the south-east of Māinaguri close to the Jhordā river. According to the old legends the *linga* appeared first in the time of Jalpeswar, the third of the Assam kings mentioned in the Jogini Tantra, and he built a temple known as the "Jalpeswar Mandir." Between his time and that of Prān Narāin, Rājā of Cooch Behār, the temple appears to have been re-built twice, but the story goes that the *linga* was eventually forgotten until Prān Narāin, who ruled about 300 years ago, dreamt that Siva appeared to him and told him that he was at Gortoli and would be found if search was made for him. The Rājā left his palace with a large army and many attendants, and, after a long search, was successful in discovering the Siva *linga*.

He at once ordered a temple to be built on the spot and the present temple was begun. Prān Narāin died before it was finished, but the work was continued by his son Mod Narāin, and finished by his grandson. Prān Narāin employed Muhammadan artists from Delhi, with the result that the temple resembles a mosque in form; it is built of durable bricks and has a high central dome with four smaller domes at each corner. The temple is built on a mound and surrounded by a moat, which is now nearly dry; the floor of the basement is sunk some depth in the

* See Martin's Eastern India, 1838, Volume III, page 443.

mound, and a flight of steps leads down to it. The *Siva linga* is fixed in a hole in this basement, and is at all times more or less covered with water, which has to be baled out before the idol can be worshipped. The building itself is square, and galleries used to run round the base and top of the large dome. The height from the basement, floor to the top of the dome is 92 feet; the lower storey is 78 feet square and the upper stories 38 and 36 feet square. The dome is 17 feet in height and has an outer diameter of 34 feet. During the earthquake of 1897 the temple was much damaged; the large dome fell in and all the outer domes were much damaged. The cement with which the brick walls were covered has disappeared and the walls themselves are being covered with creepers. Forty-six *jots* were granted revenue free by Government for the maintenance of the temple and its worship and the rents derived from them are administered by a committee appointed at Jalpāguri. Few of the members, however, take any interest in it and, though some attempts have been made to repair the temple and three of the four small domes have been re-built, it seems probable that the temple will soon become a heap of ruins.

CHAPTER III.

THE PEOPLE

GENERAL
STATISTICS.

It has been stated already that the Jalpāiguri district consists of two well defined parts, *viz* — the permanently settled *parganas* which used to form part of Rangpur, and the Western Duārs which were annexed in 1865 at the time of the Bhutān war. The population of the present district area at the last four censuses is

1872	...	417,855	shown in the margin; the
1881	...	580,570	remarkable increase of popula-
1891	...	680,736	tion is confined entirely to the
1901	...	787,380	Western Duārs, the phenomenal
			development of which is the most
			striking feature in the history
			of the district.

Early
censuses.The
Regulation
parganas.

The first attempt to enumerate the people was made in 1858-59, at the time of the Revenue Survey of Rangpur, when a rough census was held and it was found that the population of the permanently settled part of the Jalpāiguri district was 189,067; there is nothing to show how the enumeration was made, and the Deputy Commissioner reported in 1870 that he was of opinion that the estimate was too low. His views were proved to be correct by a census taken in 1871-72. It was found impossible to conduct a simultaneous census and a gradual enumeration was made which lasted throughout the cold weather; great difficulties were experienced owing to the illiterateness of most of the village headmen, who were appointed enumerators, and to the widely scattered hamlets, called by the same name, which together constituted a *mauza*. The work was, however, pushed through and the population was found to be 327,985 inhabiting an area of 1,026 square miles, giving an average density of 320 to the square mile. Between 1872 and 1891 there were various changes of jurisdiction so that the variations in the population cannot be accurately stated; it does not appear that there has been any increase during the last 30 years, but it must be remembered that there is a steady drift of the people into the Western Duārs where the land is fertile and the rates of rent low, and to a less extent into the Silliguri subdivision of the Darjeeling district.

The Western
Duārs.

At the close of the Bhutān war, a survey of the Western Duārs was made in 1865-67, and a rough estimate made by the Survey Officers returned the population at 49,620. It cannot be expected that this census was very accurate, but the country had long suffered from the depredations of the Bhutāns, and it is probable that many of the inhabitants left their homes temporarily during the war. In 1870 the Deputy Commissioner made the

first settlement of the Western Duārs and conducted a special census in connection with it; this showed the population to be 100,111. After making due allowances for errors in the enumeration made in 1865, it is clear that a migration of the people of the neighbouring districts to the fertile waste lands of the Western Duārs began as soon as British rule ensured the safety of life and property. Subsequent censuses showed an even more remarkable increase of population; in 1881 it had increased to 182,687, in 1891 to 296,348 and in 1901 to 410,606. There is every reason to believe that the next census will show an equally large increase and that people will continue to migrate into the Western Duārs until all the available waste land is brought under cultivation. The Māinaguri *tahsil* has filled up rapidly and there is very little land left for new settlers; during the last ten years the extension of cultivation in the Fālākātā *tahsil* has been remarkable and in a few years it will be as well peopled as Māinaguri. Even in the eastern *tahsils* of Alipur and Bhālka population is increasing fast and cultivation extending in every direction.

The growth of the population of the Western Duārs is due partly to the rise of the tea industry, and partly to the influx of settlers from other districts and from the Cooch Behār State. Tea was first grown in the district in 1874-75 and since that time the industry has made rapid progress; in 1876-77 there were 13 gardens with an area of 818 acres. By 1882 the number had increased to 60 with 4,670 acres under mature and 3,598 acres under immature plants, and in 1901 the number of gardens was 235 with 76,403 acres under tea, and a total outturn of 31,087,537 pounds. To work these gardens a large amount of labour is required and this led to an enormous immigration of coolies mainly from Chota Nāgpur and the Santhāl Pargannas. Rānchi alone has supplied 80,000 labourers, mainly Orāons and Mundas, and the Santhāl Pargannās 10,000. In gardens on the slopes of the hills the labour force is mainly composed of Nepālis, but these men will not work on gardens lower down on the plains.

GROWTH OF
THE POPULA-
TION.

Many tea-garden coolies after working for a time and saving a little money settle permanently in the district. Orāons are hard-working and make excellent cultivators; they are good settlers, giving little trouble and paying their rent regularly. Many Nepālis have taken up land and a flourishing settlement of them may be seen at Turturi in the Alipur *tahsil*; others own large herds of buffaloes out of which they make much profit. In addition to the ex-tea-garden coolies numbers of people from Rangpur and Cooch Behār have migrated to the Duārs, attracted by the fertile land and low rents.

Agricultural
Settlers.

The number of Europeans in the district was 284 in 1901; most of them are employed as Managers or Assistant Managers of tea-gardens.

Europeans

Census of
1901.

As stated above the total population according to the census of 1901 was 787,380, the number of inhabitants of the district having increased by 15.67 per cent since 1891. There was a decrease in every *thānā* in the regulation part of the district due principally to migration to the Western Duārs; Pātgrām on the east of the Tista river showing the largest decrease of 5.28 per cent. The population of the Western Duārs showed a large increase which was most marked in the Alipur Duār subdivision where it was 64.75 per cent.

As might have been expected the increase was least towards the west where the census of 1891 had shown large accessions of population; between 1881 and 1891 the population of the Dām-Dim *thānā* increased by 157.4 per cent, the increase in the period between 1891 and 1901 being only 28.26 per cent, while the Dhupguri outpost increased by 57.06 per cent, the Falākātā *thānā* by 57.87 per cent, and the Alipur *thānā* by 70.01 per cent. Settlers naturally go first to the lands nearest to civilisation and it is only when these are filled up that they go further afield; waste land in the Falākātā *tahsil* is eagerly sought after and there is now not much left; settlers are accordingly turning their attention to the more distant lands of the Alipur and Bhālka *tahsils* and it may be confidently anticipated that this part of the country will show the largest increase of population at the next census. The climate of the Western Duārs is notoriously bad and malarious fever of a severe type is prevalent; in these circumstances a natural increase of population can hardly be expected and practically the whole of the large increase is due to immigration.

Density of
population.

The density of the population for the whole district is 266 to the square mile. In only one *thānā*, Pātgrām, it is over 500, and in only three more, Jalpāiguri, Bodā and Dhupguri, over 400. As might be expected the population is thinnest towards the east, the density in the Alipur *thānā* being only 89, although this area showed an increase of over 70 per cent at the census of 1901. The area under reserved forest is, however, 509 square miles, and if the area of the Baikānthpur forest, 81 square miles, is added, no less than 590 square miles in the district are covered by forest. If the forests are excluded, the density of the population in the remaining area rises to 332.

The excess of males in the district is remarkable; at the last census only 862 females were enumerated for every thousand males. These figures may be explained partly by the large immigration but, even if immigrants and emigrants are excluded from the calculation, the females still only reach 89.4 per cent of the male population. Rājbanis and Musalmāns form the largest part of the local population and the figures for these are shown in the margin;

	Male.	Female.	these people probably belong to Mongoloid tribes, among which a low proportion of females is always found.
Rājbanis	170,648	150,524	
Nayās	34,310	29,574	
Shakhs	85,850	78,645	

Mention has been made before of the large immigration into the district. Nearly a quarter of the present inhabitants are foreign born and of these nearly three-quarters have come from a distance. In 1901, 188,223 immigrants were found in the district compared with 143,922 in 1891 and most of them were enumerated in the Western Duārs. The annexed table gives the percentage of foreign born to the total population in each *thānā* in the Western

Thānā.	Percentage of immigrants.	Duārs.
Māmaguri ...	23	About half of the immigrants are tea-garden coolies. The loss by immigration is small; less than 1 per thousand of the population were enumerated in
Dām-Dīm ...	48	
Dhupguri ...	38	
Alipur ...	40	
Falakātā ..	55	

other districts. This seems to show that fewer of the emigrants from Chota Nāgpur and the Santhāl Parganas return home than is usually supposed; the rich lands of the Western Duārs are a great attraction to coolies and many of them settle permanently in the district after working for a few years on the tea-gardens and saving a little money.

The only town in the district is Jalpāiguri which has a population of 10,231 souls; the rest of the district is entirely rural. At the census of 1901 the population was divided between the town of Jalpāiguri, the cantonment at Buxā, and 766 villages. The village community can, however, scarcely be said to exist and the country is divided into small hamlets, the most important homestead belonging to a substantial farmer, often the *jotdār*, while round it are the houses of his relations, under-tenants and farm labourers. The *jot* is the social unit and not the village; the *jotdar*, or, if he is an absentee, the *chukānīdar* under him, keeps the little community together; he maintains a store-house from which he makes subsistence loans of rice to his dependents or furnishes them with seed. He has often considerable difficulty in keeping his labourers; the demand for agricultural labour is so great that a man who is dissatisfied with his employer can always get work elsewhere, while there is still plenty of waste land to which any family which has saved some money can migrate and set up for itself. At the last census the revenue *mauza* was found to have been so completely forgotten that it had to be left out of account altogether and the *taluk* taken in its place.*

Towns and
villages.

In the north of the district the tea-garden industry has given rise to large settlements of labourers, the average population of which is about 3,000 souls; this population is always shifting as coolies, after working for a time on the tea-gardens, take up land and settle down as cultivators or return home with their savings. The places of those who leave the tea-gardens are filled by new immigrants.

* Gait's Census Report, 1901.

RACES OF
JALPAIGURI.

In the permanently settled part of the district Rājbanśis and Muhammadans form the bulk of the population.

In the Western Duārs, the number of races is extraordinarily numerous, ranging from European planters to Meches and Gāros, who have only recently begun to abandon their nomadic habits and rough system of cultivation by *jumming* and to settle down and till the land in the ordinary way. The tea-garden industry has introduced an amazing variety of races among which Orāons and Mundas from Chota Nāgpur and Santhāls are most numerous; many Bengal and some Cooch Behār castes are also met with, while Nepālis form a not inconsiderable section of the population. In addition to these, what may be called the local population is represented by Rājbanśis, Muhammadans, and Meches, while in the neighbourhood of Buxā and in places where the district runs into the hills, Bhutīās are found. Bengali clerks and Chinese carpenters are employed on the tea-gardens. Mārwarī merchants exploit the Western Duārs as they do many parts of India; always ready to lend money at exorbitant interest, they manage to get the simple cultivators into their debt and then extract from them the uttermost farthing or seize their land under a decree of the civil court. Cultivators are, however, generally so prosperous and crops are so certain in the Western Duārs that the Mārwarī has never succeeded in getting the hold which he has in other parts of India.

The Rājban-
śis.

The most numerous race in Jalpāiguri is the Rājbanśi or Koch, which numbered 321,170 or more than two-fifths of the total population in 1901. The Koches appeared first in Bengal about the close of the 15th or beginning of the 16th century, when Hajo founded the Koch kingdom on the downfall of the ancient Empire of Kāmrup. During the reign of his grandson Visu, the people became semi-Hinduised and adopted the name of Rājbanśi, i.e., of the royal race. They are now recognised as a distinct caste of Hindus, but their religion is very much on the surface and they adhere to many of their ancient customs and superstitions. It has been thought by some writers that the Koches come of a Dravidian stock and were driven out of the valley of the Ganges by the Aryan advance into Bengal; there seems, however, to be little doubt that they are a Mongoloid race and entered Bengal from the east by the valley of the Brāhmaputra.

The Rājbanśi women, few of whom have the least pretence to be considered good-looking, leave their heads uncovered and wear a cloth or *sari* reaching only to the knees and bound over the bosom, leaving both shoulders bare, much in the same fashion as the Assamese. Among the Rājbanśis, girls are generally married at the age of 12 or 13; the preliminary arrangements are made through a go-between called the *ghatak* or *ghatuki* and the price paid for the girl varies between Rs. 40 and Rs. 120 according to her appearance and ability to work. Rājbanśis may have as many as 10 wives and often have more than one; widow marriage is allowed. A

danguā is a man who lives with a widow as her husband and is kept by her; he is looked down upon by the Rājbanis and is considered an outcast; the woman can turn him out of her house at any time. So great is the disgust with which he is regarded by his caste-people that it is said that if a cow dies and a *danguā* removes its carcase from the cowshed, even the vultures will not eat it. Another story is that elephants will refuse to eat rice which has been tied up in grass, and offered to them by a *danguā*. A young man who has no parents often works for a wife in the old patriarchal manner; he goes to the house of the girl's parents and lives with them, and after working for them from one to seven years, the girl is given to him for his wife. A man who adopts this method of getting a wife is known as a *ghar-jū*.

Property among the Rājbanis descends from father to son; if there are several sons they share equally; a son excludes a daughter, but if a father, before his death, has given his daughter a share of his property, she can keep what has been given to her. If there are only daughters they take equal shares subject to their mother's life-interest; as long as she is living the daughters cannot take the property. If a widow re-marries, she loses all claim to property left by her husband. In default of children property goes to brothers and then to their sons.

Before leaving the Rājbanis some account must be given of the Dobāsiyās, who are found now in *taluk Koyakātā* in the Alipur *talsil*. During the wars between Nādir Deo Saheb, a powerful ruler of Cooch Behār, and the Bhutiās, a number of Rājbanis were captured and taken as prisoners into Bhutān. Subsequently Nādir Deo won a great battle, in which the Bhutiā general was killed, and after the peace which followed, the Deb Rājā of Bhutān released his captives. They returned to the Western Duārs, but found themselves outcasted and no Rājbanis would eat with them. They complained to the Duardar Saheb, but he only promised to give them land and provide them with work. He made twelve families into cultivators and appointed the men of the other fifty families to be attendants on any Bhutiās who might visit Rangpur for purposes of trade. The Dobāsiyās used to live near Buxā but, after the annexation of the Western Duārs, they removed in a body to *taluk Koyakātā*. Owing to their long residence in Bhutān, they learnt to speak Bhutiā as well as Bengali and so earned the name of Dobāsiyā.

At the last census the Muhammadans numbered 226,867* divided into Shekhs 161,495, Nasyas 63,884 and Pathans 1,488. The Shekhs and Nasyas may be considered native to the district, though a considerable number of them came originally from the adjoining districts of Rangpur and Dinājpur and from the Cooch Behār State. In appearance, dress and customs, they differ little

The Muham-
madans.

* Taken from Provincial Census, Table III, which differs slightly from Table II.

from the Rājansis and are frequently to be found living in the same hamlet with them on terms of perfect amity. They do not eat pork, but otherwise their religion sits as lightly on them as Hinduism does on the Rājansis.

Most of the Pathans are wandering traders, but some have contrived to acquire land in the district, though they are not likely to settle down in it permanently. They are usually troublesome and oppress and bully the people on whom they force their goods, while they are not averse to dacoity or highway robbery, when opportunity offers, if they think that there is a likelihood of sufficient plunder to repay their efforts.

The Orāons.

Rājansis and Muhammadans together comprise about seven-tenths of the whole population of the district. Next to them in numbers are the Orāons, of whom there were 62,844 at the census of 1901. The history of the Orāons belongs properly to the Ranchi district, from which most of them came up to the tea-gardens. In 1881 only 210 Orāons were enumerated in the Jalpaiguri district, so that the bulk of them have emigrated during the last 20 years. They are good workers, cheerful and willing, and give little trouble except when their belief in witchcraft induces them to beat, often to death, some unfortunate person. The supposed wizard or witch is denounced by the *ajhā*, as the witch-doctor is called; he is usually too cunning to take part in the beating or killing of his victim and generally escapes paying any penalty for the crime which he has instigated.

The religion of the Orāons is of a composite order; they believe in a Supreme God, whom they call Dharmesh, but hold that his good intentions are thwarted by a number of malignant spirits; their religious efforts are directed entirely to appeasing these demons so as to prevent them from harming them. Polygamy is permitted among the Orāons, but most of them are content with one wife. Widows can marry again and no restrictions are imposed on their choice of their second husbands.

Although the Orāons came into the district to work on the tea-gardens, numbers of them have settled down as cultivators, either taking up land direct from Government or holding it as under-tenants of a jotdār. As they work hard and crops never fail in the Western Duārs, their settlements are prosperous and many of them are very well to do.

The Meches.

The Meches are of Mongolian origin and are believed to be the Western Branch of the Kāchāri or Bodo tribe. Mr. W. B. Oldham, when Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling, described them as follows:—

‘They are probably the original inhabitants of the Darjeeling Terai, and are a distinctly Mongolian race, with fair skins and large bones and limbs. Their physical appearance and characteristics are quite distinct from the Tharu of the Western Terai. They are disappearing, absolutely dying out faster than any

race of whom I have known or read. The reason is, no doubt, that their distinctive cultivation is by *jhum*, which is barred by Government forest conservancy, and the spread of settled plough cultivation from the south.' It does not appear that the Meches are dying out in the Jalpāiguri district; they numbered 8,760 in 1881, by 1891 they had increased to 17,984, while at the census of 1901, 22,350 of them were enumerated. It is probable that much of the increase between 1881 and 1891 was due to migration from Rangpur and Cooch Behār, but there is no obvious reason why the Meches should not increase naturally; they are practically immune to fever and the average number of a family is about six. There is no doubt, however, that the Meches are being gradually driven towards the east owing to the pressure of more intelligent races; they are improvident and drink heavily whenever they can get liquor; they are lazy and borrow readily from any one who will lend them money without regard to the consequences. As a result they have fallen an easy prey to the money-lenders and speculators, who have exploited the Western Duārs in recent years and many of them have lost their land and been compelled to migrate to the more thinly-peopled tracts in the east of the district. Meches resent the introduction of strangers among them, and it is not uncommon, when one Mech in a hamlet has sold or been compelled to part with his land to a man of another race, for his fellow-villagers to do the same and all move away together to some more remote spot where they hope to live undisturbed.

There is reason to believe that there is a considerable strain of Nepalese blood among the Meches. Both Meches and Nepalese have greater liberty in matters of food before marriage than after—an unmarried man may take rice from persons who are not considered fit to give food to a married man. Both tribes observe the Tihar festival and both call the bride-price *sodhā* or *thekā*. The Nepalese will take water from the hands of a Mech and a curious story is told to account for this. It is said that Jang Bahadur, while Prime Minister of Nepāl, was shooting in the Darjeeling Terai when he saw and fell in love with a Mech girl, the daughter of Ujir Singh, Jamadar of Dhulābāri. He took her with him to Nepāl as his mistress and in return issued orders that in future no Nepālī should refuse to take water from a Mech. It is hardly likely that such an edict would have had any effect unless it coincided with popular prejudices, and it is far more probable that Nepālīs take water from Meches because they acknowledge them to be akin to themselves. Meches make excellent policemen and smarten up greatly under the influence of drill and discipline; the armed police reserve at Jalpāiguri is composed of 75 Gurkhas and 25 Meches and it is not easy to tell one from the other. The Subdār, a very smart officer, is a Mech though he is invariably mistaken for a Gurkha by people who do not know him; he has great command over his men and Gurkhas obey him as readily as they would one of their own race.

The Meches of the Jalpāiguri district are divided into two sub-tribes called Agniā-Mech and Jāti-Mech, which are practically endogamous, or an Agniā-Mech cannot marry a Jāti-Mech without forfeiting his position in his own clan. Among the Agniā-Mech the usual age for marriage is sixteen for a male and twelve for a female; among the Jāti-Mech both sexes marry between the ages of sixteen and twenty. Girls are allowed great freedom, and intercourse before marriage, though not expressly recognised, is not uncommon; if a girl should become pregnant, her lover is expected to come forward and marry her. Married women are required to be strictly faithful to their husbands.

Like many of the animistic tribes of India, Meches are becoming gradually Hinduised; at present they are in the transition stage and hold a very low rank according to Hindu ideas. They, themselves, admit the social superiority of the Rājās, but claim to be superior to Gāros, Lepchas and Tibetans. They eat pork, fowls, fish and lizards, but abstain from beef, and the flesh of the long-tailed sheep. Meches are, as a rule, honest and truthful though they have deteriorated somewhat in these respects owing to contact with more civilised races; false swearing is considered a grievous offence among them and the oath which they take to speak the truth runs as follows:—
 “I will speak the truth. If I speak not the truth may I and my wife and children be destroyed by Mahākāl (the deity who rules over wild animals). Let tigers and bears kill us. Let sickness seize us and all belonging to us. Let all perish and die.”

The Mundas.

Like the Oraons, the Mundas were introduced into the district by the tea industry; they did not come into the district in any numbers until comparatively recently, for only 1,855 of them were found in the Western Duārs in 1891. By 1901 the number had risen to 11,672. They are in great demand by tea-planters, for they are hardworkers and stand the climate well. Sir H. Risley in “The Tribes and Castes of Bengal” describes them as “a large Dravidian tribe of Chota Nāgpur classed on linguistic grounds as Kolarian, and closely akin to the Hos and Santhāls, and probably also to the Kandhs.”

The
Santhāls

The Santhāls also made their way into the district as tea-garden coolies and in 1901 they numbered 10,857. In Assam where they can be compelled to work they are looked on as first class labourers, but in the Western Duārs they are not held in such high esteem. As all labour is free, they can work or not as they please, and managers of gardens say that they seldom work more than ten days in the month; the rest of the time they sit idle or go out on hunting expeditions from which they do not often return empty-handed. They are very clannish and are capable of combining together to a greater extent than other races seem able to do. In 1906 when the Bengal-Duārs Railway was cut to

pieces by the floods and the price of rice rose temporarily to three seers a rupee in parts of the district, the Santhāl coolies, rather than work a little harder, combined to loot the markets and were only suppressed with some difficulty. The Santhāls are a Dravidian tribe, akin to the Mundas; most of those in the Jalpāiguri district came from the Santhāl Parganas.

The Western Duārs belonged to the Bhutiās until 1865, when it was wrested from them at the time of the Bhutān war, and a considerable number of them live in the hills within British territory. At the census of 1901, 6,798 Bhutiās were enumerated in the Jalpāiguri district, of whom 1,820 were found in the Dām-Dim police circle and 2,490 in that of Alipur Duār. Their largest village is at Chunābāti near Buxā where more than 1,000 of them reside; this village used to be just above the present cantonment, but owing to the filthy habits of the people it was feared that cholera might break out among the troops and the village was removed to Chunābāti by orders of the Government of Bengal. The Bhutiās.

The word Bhutiā signifies an inhabitant of Bhot or Tibet; Bhot is the Sanskrit form of Bod, which is the native name of Tibet, and Bhutān means the end of Bhot. The Sanskritic-speaking peoples of India consequently call the inhabitants of Tibet and Bhutān, "Bhutiās."

The Bhutiās of Buxā are physically a fine race, not very tall but very robust; most of them have flat features of the Mongoloid type, small eyes, large mouths and a light complexion. Some of them, however, have dark skins and resemble the Rāj-bansis in features; these are probably the descendants of Rāj-bansi women who were carried off into Bhutān during the raids which preceded the British occupation of the Western Duārs, but the people themselves say that their dark skins are caused by a fever which is prevalent in Chunābāti and along the foot of the hills. They are an ignorant careless people, but are always cheerful and willing workers; they enjoy a joke and I have seen a number of them roll down the steps in front of the Mess-house at Buxā, yelling with laughter, when a laughing song was played on a gramophone.

Bhutiās build their houses on stone walls or posts 8 or 10 feet from the ground; each has three rooms, one for sleeping, another for cooking, and the third for use as a store-house. They keep pigs, fowls, cows, ponies, dogs, and cats. They are not particular as to their food and eat pork, beef, ducks and fowls. Like many of the hill tribes of Assam they seldom drink milk though they make it into butter and cheese. Tea is a favourite drink; the Bhutiās will use only brick tea which they get from China through Tibet. The tea is put into an earthen vessel with cold water and a little soda and is well stirred; it is then boiled and some butter and salt put into it. After this it is

churned in a bamboo cylinder and strained through a sieve into an earthen tea-pot when it is ready for consumption. The finished article is a sort of soup not particularly palatable according to European ideas. At feasts and religious ceremonies the Bhutiās drink rice-beer which they call *bidchang*.

Many of the Bhutiās at Chunābāti, both men and women, earn their living by carrying loads from Santrabāri at the foot of the hills to the Buxā Cantonment, for which they earn four annas a trip. When a wing of a regiment was stationed at Buxā, there was plenty of work for them, but since the troops have been reduced to about 200 men, the villagers have been hit rather hard, as few of them have much cultivation.

Women are allowed all possible freedom and great license prevails among unmarried people. Among the Bhutiās of Buxā no marriage ceremony is observed; if a man wishes to marry a woman, he sends a messenger to ask her if she is willing to marry him, if she agrees to do so, she goes to his house and lives with him as his wife. Sometimes a woman demands a written promise from the man that he will not abandon her; the document given is written by the Lama or priest and witnessed by some of the headmen. Polygamy is allowed and a Bhutiā may have as many wives as he can support; if he has more than one, the first is the head wife, and the others have to obey her orders. Polyandry is also practised; if a woman's husband has brothers she is looked upon as the wife of the brothers also and cohabits with them during the absence of her husband.

The Totos.

The Totos are a curious race whose village is built on a hill called by them Badoo, about 5 miles from the Hantapārā tea-garden. There are only about forty houses of them left and they do not know whence they came, nor of what race they spring, though they allege that they have been at Totopārā for many generations. They have a language of their own, and as they associate little with other races, they can only speak a few words of Bengali and it is very difficult to communicate with them. They resemble the Bhutiās to some extent, but wear their hair long; they are very dirty in their persons and are fond of eating putrid meat; they are extremely fond of whisky or any other spirituous liquor which they can get and will drink as much as they can obtain.

The houses in Totopārā are well built, and raised on piles to a considerable height from the ground; pigs and fowls abound, and the people are prosperous. The village is very pretty, with clusters of betel-nut palms and a few large orange trees. The main orange groves are a few hundred yards away from the village, the trees are healthy and the Totos make a large amount of money by selling the fruit. The cultivable lands belonging to the village are very fertile and yield good crops. Totos marry only among themselves and a man cannot have more than

one wife; widows are allowed to re-marry, but if they do they must leave any children by their first husband with his relations

The most numerous Nepālese castes in this district are the Mangars, who number 3,709, the Limbus 2,938, the Newārs 2,770, the Murmis 2,117, the Khambus 1,818, the Gurungs 1,176, the Yākhs 1,163, and the Kāmis 1,082. The Mangars and the Gurungs are two of the three dominant tribes of Nepāl, who overthrew the Newār dynasty in 1769. The original home of the Limbus is in the east of Nepāl; from their appearance they are probably descendants of early Tibetan settlers; they do not rank among the regular fighting tribes of Nepāl, though they offered a gallant resistance to the invading Gurkhas. The Newārs were the ruling race of Nepāl until ousted by the Gurkhas; some of them still adhere to their old religion Buddhism. The Murmis belong to a Mongolian or semi-Mongolian race and claim to be the earliest settlers in Nepāl; they appear to come of a Tibetan stock which has been modified by intermixture with Nepālese races. The Khambus live in the east of Nepāl between the Sankos river and the Singhālia range and Mechi river; they claim to be Jimdārs, one of the fighting tribes of Nepāl, and bear the Kirānti title of Rai. The Yākhs are an agricultural caste calling themselves Dīwān and are considered by some to be merely a sept of Jimdārs; they inhabit the same tract of country as the Khambus and Limbus. The Kāmis are blacksmiths and goldsmiths; the caste ranks so low that in Nepāl its members are not permitted to enter the courtyards of temples and have to leave the road when one of the higher castes approaches, and to call out to give warning of their approach.*

Nepālese
castes.

Many of the Nepālis in the Jalpāiguri district are employed on tea-gardens near the hills which stand at some little elevation, such as Sām Sing, Matiali, Lankapāra, and Hānsimāra; they will not work on gardens right on the plains. In addition to these numbers have taken up land and settled down as cultivators while others are graziers and own large herds of buffaloes.

With such an extraordinary admixture of races it is not to be wondered at that many languages are spoken in the district, the most common is a corrupt dialect of Bengali, known as Rangpuri, or Rājbanī, which is spoken by 77 per cent of the population; it is the language of the Rājbanīs and Muhammadans and is spoken by most Meches. Among the languages native to the district may be mentioned Mechi and Toto. Bhutia or Tibetan is spoken at Buxā and along the foot of the hills and Khās is spoken by most of the Nepālis. Of the languages introduced by the tea industry Orāon is spoken by nearly 8 per cent of the population and Mundārī and Santhālī by more than 10,000

LANGUAGES

* An excellent account of the Nepālese castes is given in the Gazetteer of the Darjeeling district.

persons each. It may be said generally that Bengali is the common language outside the influence of the tea-gardens; on the tea-gardens a corrupt form of Hindi is current as a *lingua franca* except where the bulk of the labour force is Nepālī when Khās is the language spoken.

RELIGIONS

At the census of 1901 531,625 persons returned themselves as Hindus, 228,487 as Muhammadans, 15,236 as Animists, 6,291 as Buddhists and 2,486 as Christians. The Hindus form 68 per cent of the population; the proportion of Muhammadans has declined rapidly from 44 per cent in 1872 to 29 per cent in 1901. They are chiefly Shekhs and Nasyas, the former largely predominating, and many of them are probably converts from the aboriginal Koch and Mech races. Animists form 2 per cent of the population, and the remaining 1 per cent is composed chiefly of Christians and Buddhists.

Hinduism.

From the nature of the races, who call themselves Hindus, it is not surprising that the Hinduism professed in the district is not of a very rigid character. The Rājhsanis, who form two-fifths of the population, are described in Mr. Sunder's Settlement Report, as being "Hindus when it suits them to be so, and Meches when they obtain pork and wish to eat it;" in other words, they retain many of their ancient beliefs and superstitions. The popular religion is expressed in the worship of a number of spirits or deities whose chief attribute is their power to cause evil if they are not appeased by offerings and sacrifices. The following are the twelve principal deities of the Rājhsanis:— (1) the Bisto Thākūr, who is worshipped so that the rains may not fail; (2) the Borma Thākūr, who destroys homesteads by fire if he is displeased; (3) the Pobon Thākūr, who sends storms and hail and must be appeased to prevent them; (4) the Basumati Thākūrānī, who has power over the earth; if she is not satisfied crops fail and there is famine in the land; (5) the Bishhnori Thākūrānī, a very evil deity; if she is not pleased, children die or become blind, men and cattle are bitten by snakes, and all sorts of troubles come; (6) the Chāndi Thākūrānī, who causes sickness; (7) the Kālī Thākūrānī, who is always endeavouring to do harm and must be frequently worshipped; (8) the Mahākāl Thākūr, the god of the hills and jungles; if he is not propitiated he sends tigers and leopards to kill the people; (9) the Grām Thākūr, who prowls about villages with his wife and causes illness among children; (10) the Sib Thākūr, who protects the people from troubles, provided that offerings of milk, rice and plantains are made to him; (11) the Lakhi Thākūrānī, who brings good fortune; and (12) the Dharam Thākūr, who, like Sib and Lakhi, is a kindly deity.

Although the Rājhsanis are now considered to be a caste of Hindus, it will be seen from the above list of deities what a large part demonology plays in the religion of the people. The Hindu

law is held not to apply in its entirety to the Rāikats of Bāikanthpur, and a few years ago the Privy Council ruled that the right of adoption did not exist in this important and wealthy family.

Muhammadans are not much stricter in their religious observances than Hindus, and still retain many of the superstitions of the Rājansis and Meches from which races their ancestors were probably converts. They live on good terms with the Rājansis and it is not uncommon to find families of the two religions dwelling together in the same homesteads though in different houses.

Muhammadanism.

The Meches are still in an early stage* of transition from Animism to Hinduism; they call themselves Hindus of the Saiva sect and worship Siva under the name of Batho, and his consort Kālī as Bālī Khungri. Kālī is said to cause cholera when she is displeased. The Agmā-Mech sacrifice buffaloes, goats and pigeons to Batho, while Kālī has to content herself with pigs, fowls and goats, which the Jāti-Mech offer indifferently to either. The Jāti-Mech also worship as a household goddess a nameless personage, who is represented by a lump of sun-dried clay set up in the principal room. Other deities are Mahesh Thākūr, who is feared because he punishes people who commit faults, and Mahākāl, who is a good spirit and watches over the doings of the people. Meches prefer to burn their dead if they can afford the expense of a funeral pyre; poor people bury, placing the corpse face upwards with the head towards the south.

The Meches.

The Bhutiās are nominally Buddhists, but in practice their religion amounts to little more than repeating the mystic words "Om mani padme Hum." There is a small temple at Chunābātī, at which a Lama offers up prayers daily for the people. A few years ago the Lama died and a deputation was sent to the Sub-divisional Officer of Alīpur Duār to ask him to appoint another man as the Bhutiās felt great inconvenience for want of a Lama. He nominated a suitable person and the deputation went away satisfied.

The Bhutiās

It may be said generally that Hinduism is spreading in the Jalpāiguri district and gradually displacing the old animistic religions.

In 1888 the American Baptist Missionary Society began Christianity. work in the Jalpāiguri district, the missionary stationed at Jalpāiguri being also placed in charge of the Mission in the town and district of Dinājpur. By 1898 the number of native Christians connected with the Society was 20 in Jalpāiguri and 527 in Dinājpur. At the close of this period an additional missionary was sent to Jalpāiguri, but in 1900 one of the two missionaries was transferred to Rangpur. Sub-stations have been established at Gāirkātā, Pātkātā, and Dangnājhār. The work done by this Mission is chiefly evangelistic; the gospel is preached in villages, bazars, and markets in the district, and translations

of the Bible in Bengali, Hindi, Urdu, Nepālī, Tibetan and English are sold. In 1902, 4,200 copies of the gospels were sold and many tracts were distributed gratuitously. Attempts are made to influence the young by establishing schools in which religious as well as secular instruction is imparted.

The Kālimpong Mission of the Church of Scotland has a station at Gorubāhān, in the Darjeeling district, close to the boundary of the Western Duārs. The missionaries visit the tea-gardens and work among the tea-garden coolies. This Mission has done much to advance the spread of education.

The Scandinavian Alliance Mission works among the Bhutiās. Miss Fredricson of this Mission lives at Chunābātī and preaches to the Bhutiās in the vicinity.

**The Santhāl
Colony.**

A very interesting attempt at colonization has been made by the Church Missionary Society in *taluk* Mahākālguri in the Alipur Duār subdivision. In 1890 the Rev. A. J. Shields, who was finding difficulty in getting land for his Santhāl Christians in their own country, was informed by Mr. Sunder, the Settlement Officer of the Western Duārs, that there was plenty of good waste land in the Alipur subdivision available for settlers. Mr. Sunder selected a tract of land between the Gadādhār and Rāidhāk rivers and the Rev. A. J. Shields came up with a party of Santhāls from Godda to look at it. They were pleased with what they saw and the Bengal Government sanctioned the reservation of about 70 square miles of country for a Santhāl colony. When the Mission sent up the first colonists, the land was covered with dense reed jungle; elephants, tigers, leopards, and bears were numerous. The nearest railway was 60 miles distant, and large rivers had to be crossed in boats. The people suffered severely at first from cholera, fever and pneumonia and the mortality was high. For several years the number of colonists was not more than 500, fresh settlers could not be induced to go and it seemed as if the scheme would be a failure. The area reserved for the Santhāl colony was reduced to 27 square miles, and as there seemed no hope of occupying even this small tract, it was, with the consent of the Society, further reduced to 14 square miles. At the present time there are about 1,500 Christian and 500 other colonists, all of whom are Santhāls. Those who are not Christians sign a pledge to abstain from intoxicating drink and heathen sacrifices and to abide by the rules of the colony. Every acre of available land is under cultivation, the people are prosperous and the colony is self-supporting and costs the Church Missionary Society nothing. Owing to the clearing of the land wild animals have disappeared.

The colony is divided into ten villages, each of which has a headman chosen by the villagers and appointed by the Superintendent. The affairs of the colony are managed by a council presided over by the native pastor, of which the headmen are

members. The people have built their school-house themselves and during the past two years raised Rs. 520 for the salaries of the teachers; their church, which is a large one, cost them nearly Rs. 3,000, all of which was subscribed by themselves. Liquor shops are not allowed within a radius of 5 miles of the colony and the council does its best to prevent drunkenness. The Superintendent, the Rev Canon Cole, writes as follows:—"The colony is now an established affair. All the land has been taken up. Fresh applications are constantly made. Our answer is there is no more land available, not even enough for the families of the present colonists. Nothing succeeds like success! I was opposed to the scheme at first and thought it was a mistake and unnecessary. I was then in charge of the large *pucca* church at Taljhari and, strange to say, the greater number of those who emigrated went from the villages near Taljhari. As we afterwards remembered the well filled church there and then saw it half empty, we felt quite dispirited; but now we have the joy of seeing the large colony church filled to overflowing."

The colony is successful and its people are increasing in numbers; no land fit for cultivation remains within its limits and those who wish to set up for themselves will have to take up land elsewhere. If they are to be prevented from reverting to the old Santhāl beliefs and superstitions, it is very desirable that a resident missionary should be appointed for the colony.*

* This account of the Santhāl Colony is taken from a paper read by the Rev. Canon Cole at the Calcutta Missionary Conference on April 6th, 1908.

CHAPTER IV

PUBLIC HEALTH

GENERAL
CONDITIONS

The district is situated to the south of the Darjeeling Tarai and the Bhutān hills, and is well known to be unhealthy; in eight out of the ten years ending 1901, it figured among the six districts with the highest mortality from fever in the Province of Bengal. The mean ratio of births for the ten years from 1893 to 1902 was 31·31 per 1,000 and of deaths 31·74 per 1,000; the figures for 1901 were births 39·72 and deaths 34·33 per 1,000. The difference is partly due to improved registration, but the registration of vital statistics is still far from accurate, particularly in the tea-garden areas, the heavy rains and many unbridged rivers making it difficult for the chaukidars to report regularly at the police stations.

The Tista river divides the Jalpāiguri district into a western or moderately malarious tract and an eastern or intensely malarious region. The latter, known as the Western Duārs, has an evil reputation for malaria and black-water fever comparable only to the deadliest regions of Central Africa; intersected by numerous rivers and streams and with an exceptionally heavy rainfall, it furnishes ideal breeding grounds for the anophiles mosquito. The test of the malarial intensity of any region is the percentage of children of from two to ten years of age who have malarial parasites in their blood, the figure representing this percentage is termed the malarial endemicity index or shortly the endemic index. The figures given in the margin show the endemic indices

Jalpāiguri	16	of five places in the
Māināguri	25	district as ascertained
Rangamati	43	in 1901; subsequent
Nagāisuri	55	enquiries made in 1907
Nāgrakātā	72	prove that even these

figures are too low, and that the true endemic indices are from 10 to 20 per cent higher. The table, however, shows with fair accuracy the risk to which immigrants into the district are exposed. It will be seen that the degree of infection varies greatly. Jalpāiguri town, representing the western region, is moderately malarious, but across the Tista in the Duārs, the index rapidly rises until it reaches its maximum at Nāgrakātā. In view of the above it is not to be wondered at that the European community coming from a non-malarious country and the tea-garden coolies from slightly malarious districts suffer much from fever. The adult native population of Rājbañsir, Muḥammadañs

* I am indebted to Captain W. D. Ritchie, I.M.S., Civil Surgeon of Jalpāiguri, for assistance in preparing this chapter, and to Dr. Bentley, M.B., for his valuable note.